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Ne-Yo concert shows flashes of Michael Jackson

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61 Palestinians killed in highest one-day toll in Gaza

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4 companies blacklisted for smuggle try

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MMDA offers amnesty to erring PUV drivers

SPORTS / A24
Sta. Lucia finally bags all-Filipino title

Day of destiny looms in White House race

DALLAS, TEXAS—THE DESTINY OF THE seeming Democratic White House battle is on the line in two key cities on Tuesday, with Barack Obama seeking a knockout and Hillary Clinton desperately reaching for a lifeline.

Both Texas and economically distressed Ohio have the chance to shake

(see FOR US A1)

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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'Sleepers' back Lozada; Abalos eyes school tour

By Tarra Quismundo and Katrina L. Abarr

WHILE A GROUP OF armed men—including drivers and cockfight aficionados—has rallied round Rodolfo Lozada Jr.,

(see SLEEPERS A4)

'Fight may take longer'

MASS FOR TRUTH Former President Corazon Aquino and NBN star witness Rodolfo Lozada Jr. are surrounded by nuns during the "Mass for Truth" held at University of Santo Tomas in Manila. Lozada is a UST alumnus. MICHAEL VARCAS

Still, protests may force GMA to quit, says Cory

By Allison W. Lopez and Jocelyn R. Uy

FORMER PRESIDENT CORAZON AQUINO YESterday told Filipinos to prepare for a "long" fight, but said that in the end the public protests against corruption could force President Macapagal-Arroyo to resign.

Aquino spoke at a Mass at University of Santo Tomas, which was attended by Senate star witness Rodolfo Lozada Jr., who spoke of the looming multimillion-dollar contracts between the government and China's ZTE Corp.

At a separate event, former Presidential Chief Ronnie Puno said that despite Friday's rally in Makati City, in which thousands of protesters called for Ms Arroyo's resignation, "we still have a long way to go."

Names' remarks were carried on the website of the ABS-CBN network.

Elsewhere, in an interview, retired President Joseph Estrada rejected criticism of his presence at the Makati rally and said that those involved in the anti-Arroyo campaign would not have been able to muster

(see FIGHT A10)

Opposition split over Noli issue

By Desiree Caluza, TJ Burgonio and Nestor P. Burgos Jr.

WHETHER FILIPINOS LIKE IT or not, Vice President Noli de Castro is the most-mentioned successor to President Macapagal-Arroyo, according to the political opposition and militant groups.

"We are hoping against hope that Noli will resign. But if GMA (Ms Arroyo) will resign, Noli will be our president," Adel Tamano, spokesperson of the United Opposition (UNO), told reporters in Baguio City on Saturday.

(see OPPOSITION A10)

4 senators push probe of SouthRail project

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and TJ Burgonio

THE SENATE BLUE RIBBON committee has yet to investigate the $982-million South Railway (SouthRail) project despite calls from at least four senators to do so following Rodolfo Lozada Jr.'s allegation that the project was overpriced because of kickbacks.

"Our witness does not make one investigation. In SouthRail, yes, we have a witness in Mr. Lozada, but why will he say and others it will lead to it the burden of the committee," said Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano, chair of the blue ribbon committee, the lead panel investigating the aborted $329-million National Broadband Network (NBN) deal with ZTE Corp.

Among the senators calling for a probe of the SouthRail project are Panfilo Lacson, Manuel Roxas II, Jamby Madrigal and Rodolfo Biazon.

In his first testimony on the NBN-ZTE deal in the Senate on Feb. 6, Lozada said that a certain Antonio Ibong and a "Mr. Mallar" were the "thinker" of the SouthRail project, which he said was overpriced by at least 21 percent. (See "In the house" on Page A8.)

Lozada was referring to former Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr., who was said to have brokered the NBN-ZTE deal and demanded $130 million in kickbacks for

(see 4 SENATORS A10)

Battle arena over NBN shifts to SC

By Amando Doronila

THE STEPPED-UP CAMPAIGN to mount another people power revolt to force the resignation of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (boiled out last week, driving the deadlock from the streets to another arena, the Supreme Court.

ANALYSIS

The court hears tomorrow the petitions of former Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri seeking a ruling on the limits of Executive Order No. 464 that bars Cabinet members and other government officials

(see BATTLE A11)

GMA told: Follow bishops, junk 464

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

SPEAKING YESTERDAY UNDER President Macapagal-Arroyo to heed the Catholic bishops' call to scrap Executive Order No. 464 and allow former Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri to testify in the inquiry into the aborted $329-million broadband project.

The bipartisan call for the Arroyo ouster before the Supreme Court's scheduled hearing tomorrow on Neri's petition to stop the upper chamber from summoning him again to testify on the National Broadband Network (NBN) scandal.

The Senate has ordered Neri's access to ignoring its summons, but the court issued a status order granting the petition of Neri's contention that invitations to appear was covered by executive privilege.

"In my view all the witnesses have already testified to the Senate, except for the one that will give light to all our questions regarding the controversy—Secretary Neri," Sen. Gregorio Honasan said in an interview on dzBB radio. "It will be a big deal if he will return."

Honasan said the "ultimate repository of information" to the NBN project was the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda), which

(see GMA TOLD A11)

THE GOLD-MINING community of Mt. Diwata is a hive of small huts above a honeycomb of tunnels, whose miners suffer from mercury poisoning.

Diwata gold comes with poison

MONKAYO, COMPOSTELA Valley—Ferocious forces the hold to this gold rush area in Mindanao's Davao region, but the poison that comes with the new wealth spares no one.

Drawing thousands of dreamers and desperadoes to its honeycomb of tunnels for a promotion, the haggard Mt. Diwata, 120 kilometers north of Davao City, has yielded some 2.7 million ounces of the precious metal, according to official estimates.

Franco Tito, a former hired gun who is the mine elected official in the mountain village named after a woodland fairy, awards house workers with gold medals and pokes 45-cal. ammunition joint, stark reminder of the region's violent past.

Tito is worried about the stream that bisects his community of some 40,000 people—it is choked with plastic garbage and the milky-colored detritus of the area's preferred antiquated mining process.

The tailings...residue from the process of separating the gold from the ore...run into the Naboc River, which eventually pours into the Agusan, one of the country's largest river basins.

"There were four major problems when I arrived here...law and order, legalizing tunnels and illegals. I have solved the first three, and now I want to solve the fourth," Tito told Agence France-Presse.

Liquid mercury, a highly

(see DIWATA A11)

VILLAGE leader Franco Tito shows off his .45-cal. automatic pistol.

YES, WE CANNES! Jonathan Bangit and Gigga Quijano of J. Romero (left) carry the crossover after winning the bronze Young Global Awards trophy in Cannes, France, on the weekend. Their prize, which they received from Crusoe Gold president Marissa Jurado and Benjamin Yu for advertising Pagcor's digital, includes representing the Philippines in the public service advertising category with Ayala Foundation as client, at the international advertising festival in Cannes, France. Last year, the Philippine representatives from the Burnett creative agency won a first-ever Silver in the Cannes Young Lions competition.

WEATHER FORECAST

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Gringo: It could be bloody this time

Ex-coup leader warns against wishing for military intervention to oust GMA

By Dec. Cabeungeb

SEN. GREGORIO "GRINGO" HONASAN, ONE OF THE INSTIgators of the 1986 military mutiny that sparked the first Edsa revolution, has cautioned anti-Arroyo forces not to be too rash in seeking military intervention, saying "it could be bloody, unlike the first two people power revolts."

Honasan, a former colonel and founder of the rebel Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM), said yesterday he was bothered by the irresponsibility of the leaders of the protest rallies in calling for the military to initiate a third People Power revolt.

Honasan, who was also among the ringleaders of nine of seven coup attempts against the administration of President Gloria Arroyo—including the bloodiest 1989 attack that left 99 dead and over 500 wounded—said: "The most important thing is that we should not divide the military."

"Do not expect the military and the police to abandon the administration entirely if you do get some faction, you will divide the only legally-united group in our society," warned Honasan, who was granted amnesty for his rebellious past during the term of President Fidel Ramos and went on to win a senatorial seat in 1995 and 2001.

Honasan went into hiding again in 2006 after he was implicated in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny but the charges against him were dropped by the government shortly before the May 2007 midterm elections, where he ran for senator and won as an "independent."

He said he was against another extra-constitutional move by change.

"In those inciting the military, are you willing to take responsibility in case of an armed confrontation? If it becomes bloody, whether we like it or not, are you all going to stand in the front lines for your beliefs, at all costs, or fight for the truth?"

Honasan said this was the reason he had been quiet when asked to comment on the calls for President Arroyo's ouster over corruption allegations.

"I'm not hesitating to make any decision whether for or against because I am not ready to take responsibility for what it will say. What if they misinterpret me again?" he said.

"You're asking me why we did that in 1986? We thought we'd do that only once and we would have an ideal government and fair system. Edsa 1986 was good but what happened after was the chance?"

Honasan criticized Friday's interfaith rally as being more political than spiritual. He also lashed out at the religious and business sectors.

Help us file cases, UNO urges those barred from rally

By Desiree Caluza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—THE UNITED Opposition has urged people who were stopped by policemen and soldiers from attending the Feb. 25 interfaith rally in Malolos City to submit affidavits so that it would file appropriate charges against the government.

UNO spokesperson Abel Tamano, who will head the legal team that will study the cases, assailed the government over the weekend for stifling the constitutional rights of protesters.

"Proving our ang gobyernong ito, threatened sila na ang poder-ng mo ay labas sa kanila (The government is getting paranoid. People in government are afraid the police is against them)," Tamano said regarding the barricading.

Tamano said Sen. Francis Escudero—one guest at an induction ceremony of the Philippine Jaycees' local chapter.

Tamano said the police put up roadblocks on major highways to prevent protesters from nearby provinces from getting to the interfaith rally.

"We talked about it, we will be getting affidavits and we will go down to decide what measures to file against the police who blocked them," said Tamano.

Director General Avelino Razon Jr., Philippine National Police chief, earlier announced the police would not prevent protesters from attending the rally.

"That is why we were sad when General Razon did not fulfill his promise to us and to the people," Tamano said.

Escudero lashed Razon's claims that the police did not stop the protesters but had merely set up checkpoints to confiscate firearms and explosives.

"What the police did was not normal. It was not even random. Let us ask General Razon and look at the Natrl Custom Expressway today, I passed by there and there were no more checkpoints. Why is it that there are checkpoints when there are rallies?" Escudero said.

'Search for truth includes number of participants'

By Christine O. Avendaño

THE "SEARCH FOR TRUTH" should include getting the number right, in this case—the actual number of people that showed up in the biggest protest rally against President Macapagal-Arroyo since the National Broadband Network (NBN) scandal rocked her administration.

Malacañang said last Friday's mammoth interfaith rally in Malolos City to underscore the importance of "empirical evidence" in the "search for truth."

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye yesterday said rally organizers and the police gave radically different figures on the number of people who had gathered for the rally.

Former Presidents Corazon Aquino and Joseph Estrada were among those who attended the rally to denounce Mrs Arroyo and people close to her for allegedly benefiting from the since scrapped $329-million NBN deal with China's ZTE Corp.

Bunye said rally organizers estimated the crowd at 75,000, while the police count was no more than 15,000.

"How do you explain such a wide disparity?" Bunye said in his "View from the Palace" column. "The disparity stems from the fact that both are opinions."

"Talking about the stems from the fact that both are opinions." "talking about the stems from" ends," the widely disparate crowd estimates by the rally organizers and the police will probably never be illustrative what is fact and what is opinion, "he said.

Bunye said both the rally organizers and the police did not back up their figures with "empirical evidence."

The Bunye aide attempted to establish the actual area occupied by the crowd and multiply the area by crowd density. (To get the area, simply get the length and width of Ayala Avenue and Paseo de Roxas; virtually occupied by the rallyists, not all the center islands and areas occupied by vehicles)," he pointed out.

Bunye said one square meter could physically accommodate four persons of average size. However, he clarified that this would usually happen because "a person wanting a place and would, in all probability, occupy the whole square meter."

In Bagnio City, where he was attending Jaycees affair, former Opposition spokesperson Abel Tamano said the opposition had devised a way to estimate the numbers in protest rallies, following the police's repeating of a low turnout during the Friday rally.

"We have a formula. In an opposition rally, if the police say doing the estimate, we multiply that number by three and that is the actual number. If the administration is the one leading the rally, we divide it by three," Tamano said.

Salceda: Looming food crisis worse than political one

By Ephraim Agudo
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LEGAZPI CITY—ALBAY GOV. Joey Salceda expects a major spike in food prices to hit the country in the first quarter of the year, warning it could be "a far bigger disaster than the ongoing constitutional crisis."

In a provincial disaster meeting with Albay mayors here, Salceda said hike in the prices of food crops was announced early on by a new high of $103 per barrel at the world market.

Salceda, an economic analyst, said the price in the world market of corn had gone up by 88 percent, coconut oil by 50 percent, soybean by 100 percent, soybean meal by 85 percent and wheat by 140 percent.

He foresees the development would adversely affect food prices in the country and lots of people, especially the poor, would be left as early as this month.

"At this point, people might not feel the effects of the food crisis yet because we are still using our pump inventory. But when the government has run out of stock, it will be very challenging for the poor," Salceda said.

He said the looming food crisis also poses a big challenge to the administration — how to mitigate hunger and put more money in people's pockets.

However, Salceda was confident the administration was focused on addressing the issue, citing the Arroyo administration's track record of having been able to lower the hunger rate in the fourth quarter of 2007, at the same time self-rated poverty was reported at its lowest level.

"The government, with or without the unconstitutional context, must simply address the food security problem by putting in place additional resources to increase agricultural production," Salceda said.

The three-term Albay congressman said urgent countermeasures would have to be implemented like lifting some tariffs on imported food crops, increasing food subsidies, augmenting the budget for agriculture, reducing import duties on soybeans, wheat and corn, and enacting the cheaper medicines law.

"As an economist I haven't seen this for the longest time where everything is all happening at the same time – rising oil prices, receding US economy and increasing food prices," Salceda said.

He said he was seeing ramifications, whose there are "lower sales revenues and yet higher costs," which is risky to the economy.

Salceda told the Albay mayors not to "neglect their social services."

"Even while the nation is trying to sort out political tensions, local government units must continue to prepare strategies to confront the emerging food crisis," he said.

GMA goes malling

By Cleirsteve O. Avendaño

WHILE EVERYBODY EXPECted President Macapagal-Arroyo to spend a quiet weekend after Friday's nationwide anti-administration rally in Makati, Ms Arroyo ventured out the Palace gates yesterday for some mall time.

She went to the Mall of Asia in Pasay City to attend the launch of a book written by Ana "Inday" Consuegra III, president of the Philippine Center for Entrepreneurship (it was attended not only by businessmen but also people from show business.

She did not give a speech but she signed Consuegra's book titled, "Go Negosyo: Inay Consuegra's 50 Inspiring Stories of Entrepreneurs (Celebrity Edition)."

She also posed for pictures with Consuegra and entrepreneurs like Vina Morales, Paolo Puyat Penilla, Michael de Mesa, Ogie Alcasid, Anthony Pangilinan, Maricel Laxa and Joel Torre.

"The message we want to convey is that it's better to go into business, Go Negosyo, Ilaw ng pamilya ang," said Presidential Management Staff chief Cerge Remonde, who was with the President.

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GMA told: Follow bishops, junk EO 464

Front page 4 »

had endorsed it.

Mr. Arroyo scrapped the project to save the nation's bureaucracy electronically following allegations of overprice and kickbacks that implicated her husband. She claims that Matsushita participated in the alleged abduction of project consultant Rodolfo Lozada Jr. in an attempted cover-up sparked widespread calls for her resignation and a massive anti-Arroyo rally in Makati City on Friday.

Earlier last week, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines called on Mr. Arroyo to scrap EO 464 and allow all summoned officials to participate in investigations on the broadband scandal.

Mutually assured destruction

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said the Presidency should show "good faith" and heed the CBCP call.

Pimentel said Mrs. Arroyo should allow Neri, who is now chair of the Commission on Higher Education, to return to the Senate because this was the only response to the swelling outrage against her administration's stonewalling.

Greedy Group++

In an interview over dzBB, Gov. Alan Cayetano said that he and the other heads of the consensus investigating the $329 deal—Enrile and Sen. Rodolfo Biazon—would meet today to decide when to schedule the new hearing, possibly on Thursday or Friday, depending on the outcome of the court hearing tomorrow.

Cayetano said the MIR probe would resume with the members of the "Greedy Group++" joined by JTE consultant Dante Santiago expected to testify.

He said the Senate would issue subpoenas to former police official Quintin de la Cruz, Ruben Reyes and Leo Ilut Miguel who were described by Madrigal as part of Abalos' "Gang of Four."

Cayetano said the Senate would not make a resolution solely on the assurances of Lozada and businessman Jerry de Venecia but on whether multiple testimonies backed up their charges of irregularities.

Mixed doctrine

Also yesterday, lawyer Harry Roque said that Mr. Arroyo could not invoke executive privilege to cover up a criminal activity, citing a US Supreme Court decision in 1974 rejecting President Richard Nixon's bid to stop a subpoena of tapes of his conversations concerning the Watergate scandal, which forced him to resign.

The US court held that "when the ground for asserting privilege as to subpoenaed materials sought for use in a criminal trial is based only on the generalized interest in confidentiality, it cannot prevail over the fundamental demands of due process of law in the fair administration of criminal justice," Roque said. With a report from Cecile B. Sabeniano

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'Sinners' back Lozada

Front page 4 »

embattled former poll chief Benjamin Abalos Sr. is looking for a friendly audience to listen to his side in the broadband NBN-Zte scandal.

A lawyer for Abalos yesterday urged schools and universities, which the Senate whistle-blower has been touring, to also invite the retired Commission on Elections chair to hear his side.

In Biñan, Laguna, a morning of Hosts was crowned at dzmm one noon Saturday night led to their bending into an informal group called the "Sinners Club" to show support for Lozada, one of the organizers told the business.

With members ranging from businessmen and basic wage earners to "mga mangingisda at sabungero," the gang is a motley group of men of all ages and convictions.

"We felt at first that we had no right to meddle in the issue because we are all sinners," said businessman Boy Bayhon, the recognized head of the group. "But we realized Jun is a sinner, too, and he has admitted to being so. He has the courage to face [prosecutors] so he can tell the truth."

No forward, he has done some questionable stuff ... So we said that if we did our part, we will all be like Jun, all sinners who also have good in us," the 59-year-old Lozada admirer said.

It all started on the eve of the 6th ST Mass at La Salle Green Hills for Lozada, when Bayhon's fraternity of sorts had its regular Saturday gathering to chat hangout in Biñan.

"We are a group that, if it's not too much to say, is highly regarded in the community. That night, we were discussing about Lozada and many felt pity for him. It seemed like groupie eyes (he was being punished)," Bayhon said.

He was amazed at how even those who barely had money to spend for their daily needs volunteered to join the group.

Hottest place in hell

"It was spontaneous. We decided: we'll go to the Mass. We had some bribery cash collated so that we will be like a walking billboard where we are to walk to public areas for the attendance of people who do not want to talk," Bayhon said.

Bayhon's initial delegation of 20 men grew to 70 the next day and they joined the crowd of thousands that cheered Lozada as La Salle Green Hills.

They wore shirts that carried the humorous quote of 20 centuries later Martin Luther King Jr.: "The hottest places in hell are reserved for those who, in times of great conflict, choose to do nothing."

Human chain

"I just feel that we need to contribute in our own little way. We were touched by the candidness of Lozada, his personality," Bayhon said.

Pleasing the name Tahiro, the group again turned up at the subsequent "Mass for Truth" at the Barbaras church to mark the 22nd anniversary of the 1986 People Power revolt.

The "Sinners" were among Lozada's security men at Bacharan, forming a human chain that helped escalate off the premises and exit routes for Lozada.

Bayhon said the group had been gaining support among residents and students in the south as Lee Buñon and might soon formalize their organization into an advocacy group "Bantay Yuli"—enacting the "Proklamasyon" who seems to know the truth."

"It feels great to be able to help. This is the first time I really feel good about myself. This is the starting point and we hope that we can contribute to a real changing ourselves," he said.

Modern Everyman

Leah Navarro, executive director of the Black and White Movement, believed such a spur of the moment gathering of the Women's Club proved the noble appeal of the "problem-opposing brink."

"The way he speaks his all arguments of sanity. He is friendly, rich to every skin. He time-have well on television, you're disarmed by him, he has no crazy ideas. He's not himself ... he is a gift-speaker," Navarro said.

"It's not a performance. He's a good seller of the truth," she said.

Not everyone is happy with the seeming adulation Lozada is getting, especially on campuses.

Hear his side

In an interview after Friday's Mass for Peace and Unity in Mendiola-ang 22g. Abalos' lawyer, Salvador Panelo, criticized schools for inviting Lozada to speak to students without asking to hear Abalos' side.

Abalos has been accused of fashioning the now scrapped $329-million National Broadband Network deal between the government and China's ZTE Corp., and of offering P200 million in kickbacks to former Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri to approve the project.

Abalos has denied the allegations and threatened to sue for libel.

"He's trying to use students to back up his lies," Panelo said of Lozada. "He's trying to discredit us and the students are targeting. It up because they haven't heard the other side."

Madrigal's claim disputed

Panelo said the schools should invite him as well so that they could answer Lozada's allegations. "You should have to the other side, too," he said.

He said another claims by ex-other former witness, Diane Madrigal, that Abalos was involved in the NBN deal and had received monetary advances were all "lies."

Economist and educator is Gawad Haydee Yorac awardee

MENELIK "NENE" M. GUEVARRA, a noted economist and educator who hails from Olongapo, Zambales, has been chosen the second Gawad Haydee Yorac for Outstanding Leadership and Public Service awardee.

This was announced by Manila Electric Company (Meralco), sponsor of the search in cooperation with the University of the Philippines.

The award rites will be held at Meralco Theater at the Ortigas Center on March 6, Nene's birthday. Guevarra will receive a cash grant and a trophy sculpted by National Artist Napoleon Abueva.

GUEVARRA

Work ethic worth emulating

The award recognizes leaders from the private sector, the government service and volunteer organizations whose attributes, work ethic and service to the nation are worth emulating.

Like the late Yorac, the forty-third of the Presidential Commission on Good Government, the awardee must be a role model for public service.

The first awardee was the force behind Gawad Galing, Antonio F. Meloto.

Guevarra is president and CEO of Synergeia Foundation Inc. which is composed of individuals and institutions that aim to give Filipino students better access to quality basic education.

Through Synergeia, Guevarra has linked government entities with businesses in order to generate the resources needed to execute programs that make education cost effective and a reality for many Filipinos.

Former teacher

Guevarra was an undersecretary in the Department of Finance during the term of President Fidel V. Ramos, when she was part of the team that helped bring economic stability to the country. She received national awards for her work and was cited in 1999 by the Institute as "a Filipina who did us proud."

Guevarra holds graduate degrees in economics, fiscal studies and public finance. A former elementary school teacher, she says that "to enable a person to improve his life, he must be empowered to read, write and perform basic mathematical operations."

Multiple degrees

Guevarra obtained her Bachelor of Science in Education and Master of Arts (M.A.) in Education degrees from Philippine Normal University. She holds an M.A. in Economics from the University of Asia and the Pacific as a Ford Foundation scholar, an M.A. in Fiscal Studies from the University of Bath in the United Kingdom as a British Council scholar and a Ph.D. in Public Finance, summa cum laude, from the Lyceum of the Philippines.

PNP: Yes, we nabbed terrorist but we're not talking

By Nikko Dizon
PHILIPPINE INQ...

Interior Police Director General Avelino Razon Jr. yesterday remained tight-lipped on the details of the arrest of an alleged foreign terrorist, saying fellow spy operatives were still going on.

"I won't talk about it in the meantime," Razon told reporters in a phone patch interview.

Razon said he only disclosed the arrest on Friday morning after a reporter, whom he did not name, insinuated that the police had fabricated the arrest to justify the deployment of security forces against the thousands of protesters who joined Friday's indefinite rally in Makati City.

"I only revealed that because there was a reporter who said that we are... we didn't invent it, he, arrest was made but as to the details, let's not talk about it yet because the operations are still ongoing. I hope you understand," Razon said.

The PNP chief revealed the arrest hours before tens of thousands of protesters gathered in Makati to call for the resignation of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo amid allegations that her family was involved in the controversial National Broadband Network (NBN) deal with China's ZTE Corp.

But Razon has neither identified the suspect nor his nationality.

He would only say that the suspect had links to the Abu Sayyaf group and the Jemaah Islamiyah regional terror network and was arrested early last week in a province near Metro Manila.

Razon said the arrest was a result of blow-by-operations after documents, reportedly written in Arabic, were recovered in a parking lot somewhere in the metropolis that reportedly belonged to Mr. Arroyo and bore some foreign notations.

On Feb. 15, the Presidential Security Group said top security officials received documents prior to assassination bis Arroyo.

But the arrest of the suspected terrorist was not discussed during the security briefing conducted for Mr. Arroyo at Camp Crame last Friday when she hiked up her self's salary.

"Previously, the Air Force used to be the first (to deploy). But this time, I have no doubt this will no longer happen. Never again," said PAF commanding general Pedrito Cadungog yesterday during a visit to Palawan.

The true guest of honor at the anniversary of the Western Command's 17th Tactical Wing here.

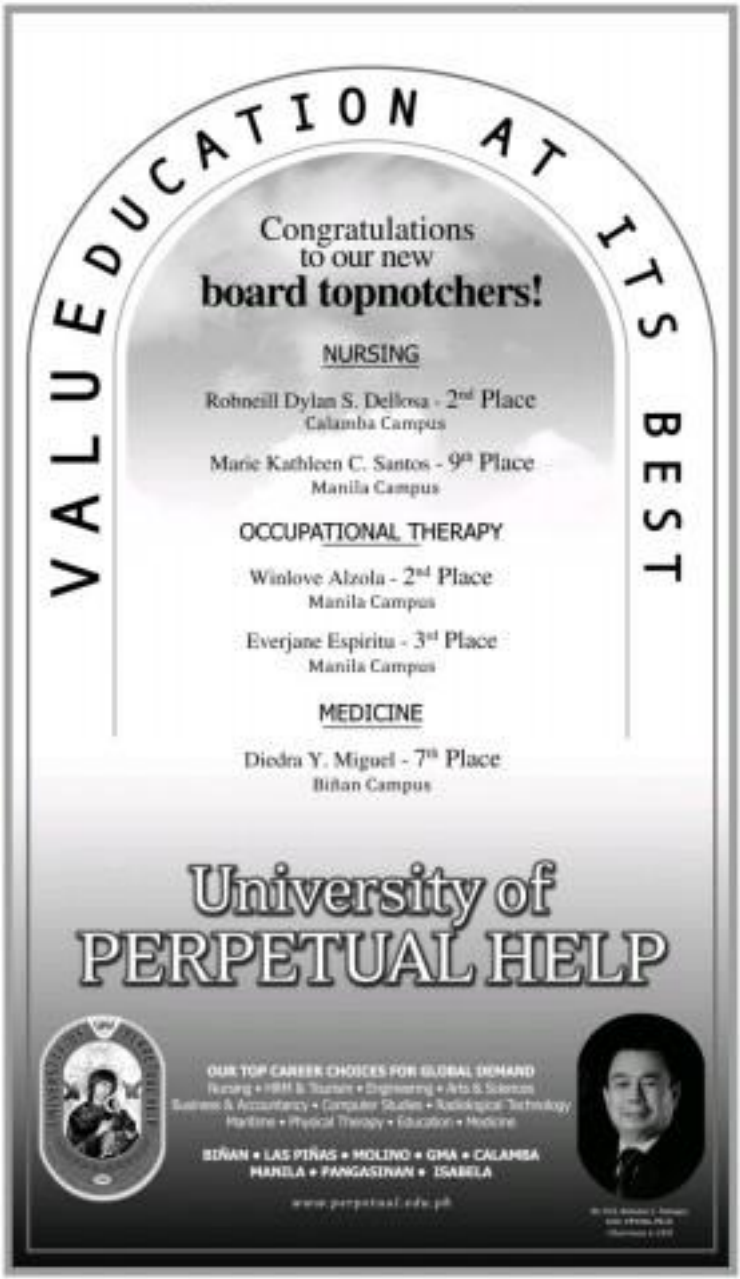
Expressing support for embattled President Macapagal-Arroyo, who is under pressure to step down from civil society groups and the opposition over the ZTE-NBN scandal, Cadungog said he had not received any feelers or invitations to withdraw support from the administration.

"The moment anyone approaches me with that suggestion, I will remind him as enemy," he said.

Cadungog said that unlike during previous political crises where the PAF was the first major service command to deliver since it had the ability to quickly deploy troops and air power, the rank and file were solidly behind the administration. Redemptor Aruba, Inquirer Southern Luzon

'PAF no spark'

PUERTO PRINCESA City—Unlike Sibu I and Sibu II when the Philippine Air Force spearhead the defections to the Armed Forces of the Philippines, this time around the PAF will not lead any military action against the Arroyo administration.



THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, March 3, 2008
6th Week of Lent
Ash Wednesday

1st Reading: Is 55:10-11
Gospel: Jn 6:41-51

In those days Jesus left Samaria for Galilee. Jesus himself said that no prophet is recognized in his own country. So the Galileans welcomed him when he arrived, because of all the things he had done in Jerusalem during the Festival and which they had seen, for they too had gone to the feast.

Jesus went back to Cana in Galilee where he had changed the water into wine. At Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill, and when he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went and asked him to come and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.

Jesus said, "Unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe?" The official said, "Sir, come down before my child dies." And Jesus replied, "Go, your son is living."

The man had faith in the word that Jesus spoke to him and went his way. He was already going down the hills—and when his servants met him with the news, "Your son has recovered!" for he asked them at what hour the child had begun to recover and they said to him, "The fever left him yesterday at the seventh hour (about one o'clock." And the father realized that it was the hour when Jesus said him, "Your son is living." And he became a believer, he and all his family.

Jesus performed this second miraculous sign when he returned from Judea to Galilee.

Commentary

This second sign is unlike that Jesus performed—closely related to his first, also changing of water into wine, in the Sacramental Rite of Baptism a great change upon the substance of water, in the second, Jesus changes the body of a dying child (not one that is left of life and vigor).

He rightly ask the Lord to effect such a change upon our lives, to bring light to our drooping spirits, restoring health to our souls through the forgiveness of our sins. The Lord, who changed water into wine, is sure that capable of effecting great change within our hearts.

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Day of destiny looms in White House race

From page A1

decisive blow in the increasingly angry Democratic race, in which one hopeful will make history as the first black or woman presidential nominee.

Senator Obama, 46, hopes to take his winning streak to 13 straight nominating contests, on a day which also includes voting in Rhode Island and Vermont.

Senator Clinton, 60, needs to come out of Sunday with a reason to go on, as she currently trails Obama in nominating delegates, fundraising, the popular vote and momentum in the race to battle likely Republican nominee John McCain.

Senator McCain, the Vietnam war hero who has pulled off a stunning comeback after his campaign was left for dead last year, hopes to finally nail down the Republican nomination by dispatching pesky challenger Mike Huckabee.

McCain is tipped to pick up the remaining support he needs to attain the threshold of 1,191 delegates in the party convention in September.

Must-wins for Hillary

Should Clinton lose both Ohio and Texas, she would face intense pressure to bail her White House campaign for the good of the Democratic party.

"We have to win on Tuesday, that's not a surprise to any of you and we are going to win on Tuesday," the former first lady said in Texas on Saturday.

But the campaign may be regretting the congested [sic] dates laid down by former President Bill Clinton last month.

"If she wins in Texas and Ohio, I think she'll be the nominee," Bill Clinton told supporters in Beaumont, Texas. "If you don't deliver for her, I don't think she can be. It's all on you."

In recent days, the Clinton campaign has appeared to be scrambling around for a reason to stay in the contest should the former first lady fail to pull off a double win, with recent polls giving Obama a lead in the Lone Star state.

"If [Obama] is unable to win all four states, it shows that Democrats are engaged in either rumor in the media have referred to as buyer's remorse, that there is an interest in having this campaign go on until go on into at least Pennsylvania and beyond," Clinton spokesperson Howard Wolfson said last week.

'Lunacy'

But the Obama campaign has dismissed as "lunacy" Clinton's argument that the race for the nominating delegates, who will anoint the nominee, is still close.

Obama supporters say their team is more than 150 ahead and are "unstoppable." An 89-page party memo[sic] who can vote here they like at the party convention—are swarming to the Illinois senator's side.

A count of total delegates by website Real Clear Politics on Saturday showed Obama leading by 1,625 to Clinton's 1,509. A total of 2,025 are needed for the Democratic party nomination.

McCain had 1019 delegates, to former Arkansas governor Huckabee's 254.

The upshot, according to the Obama camp, is that Clinton needs landslide wins in Ohio, Texas, Pennsylvania—which votes on April 22—and beyond, just to catch up.

Such a scenario seems unlikely, as latest polls in Texas and Ohio have the race a virtual dead-heat, but with some signs Obama is cutting into Clinton's once vast of white, blue-collar voters and Hispanics.

A new Reuters/C-Span-Zogby survey found Obama leading Clinton 48 percent to 43 percent in Texas. A previous poll by Zogby released on Friday had Obama up 48 to 42 percent.

In Ohio, the rivals were tied at 45 percent, according to Saturday's poll.

Fierce counterattacks

As the March 4 contests loomed, Clinton, breathing defiance as pundits wrote her off, launched a string of fierce attacks on Obama's capacity to serve as commander-in-chief.

Obama hammered back hard, mocking Clinton's vows to forge change, saying her vote for war in Iraq was a sign of a shifty style of politics.

But a day after implying in a campaign ad that her Democratic foe was unfit to answer an urgent 3 a.m. foreign policy crisis, the New York senator said Obama's white campaign was based on one speech[sic] was not ready to be president.

Obama's spokesperson Bill Burton was equally scathing in response.

"The senator of the only major foreign policy decision she has ever faced in her career, Senator Clinton chose to follow the politics of the moment instead of the conclusions in the National Intelligence Estimate and voted for a war that has made us less safe and less secure," Burton said, referring to Clinton's 2002 vote to authorize the use of force in Iraq, a war Obama had opposed. AFP

Learn How to Read the Mind of the Markets

With a positive economic outlook and a dynamic stock market, how do you pick the right stocks?

While there are many ways to analyze the financial markets, many investors remain key on fundamental analysis. This is a method of predicting future price movements by looking at economic, political, and other relevant environmental factors that affect the basic supply and demand of a certain stock or commodity. More sophisticated investors would also use technical analysis, which is the study of market action through the use of charts for the purpose of forecasting future price trends. Investors and traders on the lookout for day-to-day market positioning find this investing tool extremely relevant. The use of technical analysis allows them to capture profit opportunities even in the short-term movements and fluctuations of the down and flows markets.

For professional investors, investing is never guesswork. The Center for Global Best Practices (contact 843 7138 or 09 5 xxx-xxx-xxx) will be hosting a two-day pioneering seminar entitled "READING THE MIND OF THE MARKETS" on April 3 & 4 at The Peninsula Manila, Makati City. This Market Reading seminar is designed to help participants interpret economic news and market information and know how to benefit from them. The seminar will enable decision makers and market analysts to understand factors how affect interest rates, foreign exchange and equity markets. This pioneering course aims to teach participants technical market trading for those who are seriously interested to learn how to invest properly in the stock or forex markets. Other participants will learn how to pinpoint entry, exits, and targets for trades and formulate a trade plan based on the analysis of market information.

The main lecturer for this event is Jonathan L. Ravelas, chief market strategist of Banco de Oro. He is an authority and a leading market practitioner in the use of the Wave Principle as one of the primary tools in analyzing markets. Over the years, he has maintained a consistent record of profitable recommendations to his clients. He has delivered many lectures in the field of forecasting using different methods that can be applied to financial markets here and abroad. He is one of the most quoted market analysts in the investment world and his daily and weekly market news appear regularly in Business World, the Philippine Daily Inquirer and the Asian Wall Street Journal. He is also a sought-after commentator regularly interviewed on ANC, Channel, Bloomberg and BBC.

4 senators push probe

From page A1

his group, which allegedly included Pretender Mursyaqad Arroyo and her husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo.

Rodon has denied the allegations against him.

Lozada, who was tapped as consultant to the Southlink project by former Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri, and Abalos and Mallari had arrested him that "they would take care of the Palace."

Businessman Jose "Joey" de Venecia III last night derided involvement in the allegedly overpriced Southlink project.

"I don't know anything about Southlink. I'm sure the only time I was involved is," said De Venecia, who blew the whistle on the allegedly anomalous $189.-ZTE deal.

De Venecia said he didn't know anybody by the name of Anthony Pring or Huang who, fellow whistle-blower Rodolfo Noel Lozada Jr. said, had brokered the Southlink project.

"That's a very common name. I don't know anybody there," he said when asked about an anthropic of a conversation, which is being circulated in media circles, in which he supposedly told a certain Richard that he would sign as Anthony Pring or Huang in any project.

In the anthropic, De Venecia purportedly said: "But using my signature, Anthony Pring [or Huang] would be my signature."

"I don't know who Pring, or what, or who I am?" De Venecia said when reached for comment last night.

De Venecia told the Inquirer that the "former person who an answer that is Jun Aus would probably know this since he had mentioned handling the ZTE and the Southlink projects."

In querying calls to investigate Southlink, Carpio took a dig at his colleagues who dared be calling an investigation on a whim.

"One senator who reads something in the papers or sees just one witness immediately likes a resolution for an investigation but the burden of following it up or to conclude it is left with the chairman and the staff of the committee. Everybody helps but it is not that simple," said Carpio[sic] in an interview aired over dzBB radio.

Stonewalling

In a text message, Madrigal was asked by Carpio[sic] is stonewalling.

"It is imperative that the Senate [investigate] this. It is not the duties of senators that calling a Senate investigation credible. It is the quality of the witnesses' testimony," Madrigal said.

She noted that the NBN probe was triggered by the testimony of Joey de Venecia while the "Hello Garci" wiretapping scandal was reopened last year with the appearance of former intelligence agent Maj. Rolando Ilas the witness.

MOU signed

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon has also called for a parallel investigation of Southlink and North Luzon Railways Corp. as both projects have been cited in the NBN probe as among the deals tainted with corruption.

Senate Blue Ribbon Committee No. 2[Even Pls. 13 nothing a probe of Southlink.

Although the Philippine National Railways has denied that the project had been bid out, Pinlac noted that the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) and China's Ministry of Commerce had already signed a memorandum of understanding in August the NSR-Iligan railway from Calamba, Laguna, to Matnog, Sorsogon, through the region's import Bank of China.

In his own resolution setting a similar probe, Lacson said: "Numerous anomalous procurement deals have become a commonoccurrence in this administration wherein government officials blatantly disregard the rule of law just to further their pecuniary interests."

Even if other Senate committees took the lead in the Southlink probe, it would still have to go through the Blue Ribbon committee because it involves corruption and malfeasance, according to Cayetano.

Cayetano said other committees might not be able to do their jobs considering that "the fact Ebdon has a high profile not only because its investigations are covered by media but also because [Southlink] involves billions of pesos and involves other high public officials."

"If we do it every day, the other work of the Senate might stop, "he said.

IN THE KNOW

THE SOUTHRAIL PROJECT IS A $[illegible]-million project seeking to link Legazpi in southeastern Bicol through a high-speed train service. It will be funded by a loan from China.

Its first phase involves rehabilitation of the existing 423-kilometer Philippine National Railways (PNR) network from Calamba in Laguna to Legazpi City in Albay at a cost of about $[illegible] million. The second, estimated to cost $[illegible] million, involves the construction of a 333-km line from Carmelita to Albay to Matnog in Sorsogon.

In June 2007, the PNR signed a contract for a $[illegible]-million project that will link Southlink with China Road and Bridge Corp. a $[illegible] million railway project that will connect Subic in Zambales to Clarkfield in Pampanga.

Phase I of the linkage will connect the cities of Caloocan and Mandaluyong, passing through the cities of Manila, Pasay, Parañaque and Taguig. For Phase 2, the line will run from Alabang to Calamba.

In a testimony before the Senate on Feb. 8, Rodolfo Noel Lozada Jr. alleged that the Southlink project was [illegible] by 22 percent or about $70 million to accommodate kickbacks. (At that percentage, the project cost would be $318 million, about third of the total project cost of $902 million.) The Senate has yet to conclude its investigation of the "gargantuan" loan for Southlink. CyriL Bonoforte, Inquirer Research

Save Bulacan trees from ax, Atienza urged

By Jocelyn R. Uy

"MR. ATIENZA, SPARE THESE TREES!"

This was the call of an environmentalist group yesterday to Environment Secretary Lito Atienza as they urged him to save hundreds of decades-old trees along Macarthur Highway in Bulacan from the chain saw.

The Bangon Kalikasan Movement (BKM) appealed to Atienza to revoke the permit former Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes, now the energy secretary, issued last year to the Department of Public Works and Highways allowing the chopping down of 6,000 trees along a stretch of the highway from Meycauayan to Calumpit town to make way for a road widening project.

"Before Reyes left the DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources), we reminded him of his Greening the Philippine Highways and Trees for Life projects as we asked him to revoke the permit, to no avail," said BKM president Joey Papa.

The BKM had sought a temporary restraining order from the Malolos Regional Trial Court to stop the endorsement of the permit but their petition was dismissed, Papa said.

He said a former president of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines Bulacan chapter, lawyer Jose de la Rama, would file another petition for a TRO, "meanwhile, the trees will continue to fall unless Atienza steps in to revoke the order."

"We hope Secretary Atienza will heed our plea," he said, stressing the importance of trees to the environment.

"As experts warned last year, (there are) only nine years left for governments and people to do something dramatic to mitigate extreme climate changes ... yet certain authorities continue to be so callous, to say the least," Papa said.

DepEd: Keep graduation rites simple

By Kristine L. Alave

KEEP IT SIMPLE.

The Department of Education (DepEd) yesterday reminded heads of public schools and teachers to observe austerity in graduation rites.

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus said all principals were prohibited from asking for financial contributions from the parents of graduating students.

"We are reminding our principals to refrain from collecting any kind of fees for graduation rites, or from holding extravagant graduation rites in extraordinary venues," Lapus said in a memorandum dated Feb. 20.

"This is part of our austerity measures, so as not to financially burden the parents, who are looking forward to this important event in their children's lives," he said.

Lapus also reminded principals and teachers that commencement exercises should be conducted solemnly and should not "be used as a venue for a political forum."

The DepEd's order prohibits the collection of fees for graduation rites, the unnecessary imposition of non-academic projects as requirements for graduation, and collecting funds by voluntary contributions for yearbooks.

If the school wants to solicit funds for the rites, the project should be handled by the Parents and Teachers Community Association (PTCA), Lapus said.

"The PTCA may solicit voluntary contributions for graduation ceremonies from members, but teachers and principals should not be involved in the collection of these contributions," he said.

Duterte: I didn't ask GMA to quit

DAVAO CITY—MAYOR RODRIGO DUTERTE yesterday denied reports he had asked President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to step down.

"I never said that," Duterte said over his Sunday television program here.

Duterte was an opposition stalwart before he became an ally of Ms. Arroyo.

The reports, mostly aired over the radio, were prompted by Duterte's absence during Ms. Arroyo's two visits to the Davao region this year.

In his television program, Duterte explained that he missed the President's two visits because he was on vacation both times.

"I was not there because I was on vacation," he said.

Pressed on his stand in the ZTE-NBN controversy hounding the President, Duterte said he would rather wait for the results of the investigations being conducted, including the Senate inquiry.

"When I was sworn into office, my blind loyalty went to you—not to the President or to anybody. My decision will be for you. What I will say in the next few days is based on what I know is the truth ... and I will act accordingly," he said.

But while asking for his assurance for the President, Duterte said he was not defending her.

"There is no need to defend her. If she is telling the truth, what is there to defend?" Duterte said. *Dennis Santos, Charlie Lobase and Jeffrey Tupas, Mindanao Bureau*

ATO grounds flight school after crash

By Tarra Quismundo

THE AIR TRANSportation Office (ATO) has suspended the operations of its Subic-based aviation school whose trainer plane crashed Saturday morning, killing its instructor and a student pilot.

ATO Executive Director Daniel Dimagiba ordered Flexiflyer Aviation School in Hangar 6 to halt operations while aviation officials examine how the school and its training programs are run.

Killed were Capt. Mike Bermejo and his student, Kristel Mohan, 18, an Indian national.

It was the second major accident involving Flexiflyer in less than a year.

"We will have a team study the school's training program, including the qualifications of their instructors, and safety standards," Dimagiba said when reached by the Inquirer on the phone.

The Cessna plane belonging to the school collided in mid-air during training flights in July 2003. Two student pilots and an instructor were killed in the crash near the Pinatubo region in Pampanga.

The ATO collected some 44 student accidents—10 involving Cessna—last year, according to ATO records.

Dimagiba said the Cessna is a common training plane because of its simple and easy-to-learn system.

"The Cessna is slow-moving, but it depends on the flying school and how they manage the safety standards," he said.

Dimagiba maintained that there were at least 20 flying schools operating around the country, most of which conduct their training flights over Pinatubo because of its proximity to Manila.

Training flights are banned from Metro Manila's air space to avoid disrupting incoming and outgoing commercial, chartered and military flights.

SC affirms doc, hospital liable in patient's death

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE SUPREME COURT HAS UPHELD THE decision for reconsideration of Medical City to overturn the high tribunal's decision finding the hospital's owned and a member of its surgical staff liable for the death of a patient after two pieces of gauze were left in her body cavity.

In a resolution released last month, the high court affirmed its January 2007 decision that found Professional Services Inc. (PSI), the hospital owner, and Dr. Miguel Amjuli liable for "medical negligence."

Medical City and Amjuli were earlier ordered to pay the family of Natividad Agana over P3 million in damages for medical negligence. Agana died in 1986, two years after she was operated on for cancer of the sigmoid. The sigmoid colon joins the rectum, which joins the anus or the opening where solid waste passes out of the body.

Agana had suffered "excruciating pain" in her anal region following the operation, and the pieces of gauze that were 1.5 inches to which were later found. The last incision in her vaginal wall.

In questioning the court's decision, PSI said Amjuli was not its employee and Agana's family had failed to prove that it controlled or had the power to control the surgeon in choosing to seek Amjuli's services.

PSI also contended that it could not be held liable for neglecting its corporate responsibility since it was Amjuli's negligence that led to Agana's injury.

But the high court said that Medical City is responsible for Agana's fate under the doctrine of corporate responsibility. Such responsibility includes the proper supervision of its staff and the task of making a reasonable effort to monitor and oversee the treatment prescribed and done by its doctors, it said.

In this case, the hospital was found wanting because it failed to conduct an immediate investigation of the reported missing gauze, thus causing Agana agony, the court said.

It noted that a member of the hospital's staff was "evasive" when asked on the issue whether the hospital took action on the missing gauzes, and showed that lack of concern for the patient which allowed the fatal mistake of supervision.

You only did PSI breach its duty to oversee or supervise all persons who practice medicine within its walls, it also failed to take an active step to thwart the negligence committed," it said.

The 13-page Supreme Court resolution was penned by Justice Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez, who retired last week.

Koreans top hiked January visitors to RP

KOREANS HAVE TOPPED THE LIST OF foreigners visiting the Philippines.

The Bureau of Immigration yesterday reported that more than 231,000 foreigners arrived in the country in January.

Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan said Koreans topped the list of visitors, followed by Americans, Japanese and Chinese.

Libanan disclosed that a total of 274,005 foreigners—mostly tourists—arrived in January, compared to the 227,395 who entered the country in the same month last year.

The 46 chief said the numbers represented only those who were foreigners who arrived at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) but did not include those who entered through other ports such as Mactan, Subic, Davao, Clark and Laoag.

"The figures are very encouraging. They augur well for the country's efforts to bolster its reputation as one of the most favored tourist destinations in the Asia-Pacific," Libanan said in a statement.

"A significant percentage of the foreign visitors who arrived were prospective investors and repatriates who would contribute greatly to the country's economic development," he added.

He surmised the influx of foreigners could be attributed to the appreciation of the peso vis-a-vis the dollar.

Libanan also cited the policy reforms he initiated at the BI which is encouraging more foreign tourists to come here.

Among these are the visa-on-arrival privilege to citizens from one to two years the maximum allowable stay of foreign tourists.

"Unlike in the past when foreign tourists were allowed a maximum stay of one year, they can now extend their stay for up to two years and even longer if their reasons are meritorious," said BI spokesperson Dean Reyes B.

Reyes disclosed that more than 200,000 of the passengers were tourists, including more than 50,000 balikbayan. The rest were permanent residents, repatriates and holders of investor's and retiree's visas.

Marjorie C. Pefia

Fishers urge EU to defer $90-M aid

A LEFTLEANING FISHER FOLK GROUP yesterday asked the European Union to defer handing over its $90-million in aid to the Philippines until the country had a new president.

The Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mangingisda ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya), in a letter to Ambassador Alistair Macdonald, head of the European Commission delegation to the Philippines, feared the aid would not trickle down to poor Filipinos like its members but end up in the pockets of corrupt politicians in the Arroyo administration.

Pamalakaya said the economic and social aid that came from the "hard-earned taxes" of the working people of Europe might be co-opted by officials of the Arroyo administration known for "their lavish for high crimes of corruption."

President Arroyo, her husband Jose Miguel Arroyo and some officials of her administration are facing charges in the House of Representatives' impeachment complaint for the overpriced government National Broadband Network (NBN) deal with China's ZTE Corp.

"Honorable Macdonald, given the long-running track record of the Arroyo administration, there is no assurance the $0-million euro ($90 million) aid to the Philippines will benefit the target beneficiaries and alleviate the sad economic state of poor people across the country," Pamalakaya said in the letter.

It said that of the 62 million euros granted under the EC Multi-Annual Indicative Program, 38 million euros had been allocated to basic social services like health.

Another 12 million euros had been earmarked for peace measures in Mindanao while 12 million euros had been set aside for trade development.

But Pamalakaya said that under the Arroyo administration, there was a "strong possibility" most of the funds would end up lining the pockets of corrupt politicians.

"Moderating greed is not even the cup of tea of this corrupt, criminal and brutal regime. We don't know how much of the European Union funds will go to the ruling political gangland in Malacañang, but what is sure is that the Arroyo presidency will make money out of the financial people's taxpayer money," the group said.

Jaculyn D. Ty

Banaue Sagada
Adventure
Tolgosaok Hachiya
March 18 - 22, 2006
Tour fares

Diwata gold comes with poison

From page A1

regulated substance, is openly sold here for P1,200 a kilogram to stores that also stock food.

Shabby huts made of plywood and sheets of corrugated tin cling precariously to cliff sides. Her bikes ply the muddy roads. The main causes of death are landslides and tunnel cave-ins.

The miners are paid in ore, not cash. After school, children pound the ore into dust.

Many residents suffer the effects of mercury poisoning, as the heavy metal used to separate the gold from the ore eventually contaminates food and water.

Mercury poisoning

"You smell a kilo of mercury to process 276 kilos of ore," said Guilbertine Gatbonton, who was kicked out of the Philippine Army after he was found to be moonlighting here.

Gatbonton spoils a tattoo of his old infantry unit along with a thick gold chain and pendant, visible around from his bare chest.

MINERS enter a tunnel in the gold-rich area of Mt. Diwata in Compostela Valley.

Yet, who still moves around with armed bodyguards, does not dispute rumors that he has killed at least 40 men, saying: "We were all illegals, so none of the killings were reported to the authorities."

There were few winners in the land grab that followed the discovery of gold here, and most of them are now firmly entrenched in local politics.

Wild, wild west

"In the old days this was the wild, wild west," Tito said, recounting his corroboration from Army raids, neighborhood toughs, bodyguard and arms dealer gun for a key stakeholder, thwarting three assassination attempts along the way.

All sorts of undesirables were drawn here—discharged soldiers and police, bandits, hoods, thugs, kidnappers, rapists, ex-convicts, fugitives, people who scrubbed on their deeds," he said.

The national government was largely absent in the early days, and it was cut out of the spoils since by law small-scale miners need only pay income tax.

Negligent over gov't plan

Instead, miners forked out a "revolutionary tax," essentially extortion money exhausted by the communist New People's Army to fund its decades-old Maoist insurgency.

Last month, NPA guerrillas attacked a mill near here, killing two bodyguards of the Mandayas town mayor, Manuel Sellanes.

GOLD RUSH SITE

In 2002, President Macapagal-Arroyo declared Diwata and surrounding areas a mineral reservation, laying out plans to lord out the property to mining companies, which around employ modern methods and safeguard the environment.

But after paying for their right to be here with blood, the locals are indignant.

"We don't want Diwatland to remain like this," Governor Uy said. "But we will oppose its turnover into a foreign-owned company."

She said: "Convert this into a highly mechanized, large-scale operation and that would be throwing thousands of people out of work."

AFP

Battle arena over NBN shifts to SC

n page A4

n from testifying in legislative in- egislative without presidential ver) has invoked the doctrine of xecutive privilege to stop the Sen.

Senate having lost its appeal his de- ision with the President on the e committee ECIR confirm (National ment Authority (NBN) contract ith China's ZTE Corp.

ssessing the importance of the ct, Chief Justice Reynato Puno A. Sereno's position marshal "defiance ... paramount" of the doctrine of ex- ecutive privilege. Puno said the court will determine "which economic ests of the President can be con- ered part of privilege."

Although the constitutionality of the doctrine has been upheld, the ourt has yet to define its limits.

Associate Justice Adolf Azcuna has phasized that the decision on the ase would "give light on the ex- ent of executive privilege." He said, s a very important case because it is the first time that we are asked by the people to intervene in ..."

Senate versus legal circles, among ose PC Joaquin G. Bernas, have ob- ined executive privilege as "the wer of the President to withhold rom disclosure of information which involves, the Congress, and ultimately the public."

These types of information, Bernas pointed out, "included those which are of a nature that disclosure would subvert military or diplomatic secrets, or information about enemy of persons who furnish in- formation of violations of law, or in- formation about internal delibera- tions in computing the process by which government decisions are reached."

Disturbing silence

According to Bernas, of those ypes of information, "perhaps the ighest ones are those involved de- liberations leading to a government decision. But the decision, once reached, unless it is about confiden- tial military or diplomatic measure, can become a matter of public con- cern. Certainly if a decision reached is criminal, it cannot be privileged."

He said that for this reason, "the vi- olence of Secretary Romulo Neri is very disturbing."

Neri has been ordered and refused by other private lawyers, among them mother Dean Jr., former secretary of defense of President Arroyo and law senior partner of the Villaraza Cruz Marcelo law firm, who said, "state- ments for executive privilege is con- ve up criminal acts."

This refers to the allegations of corruptions and kickbacks on the NBN scandal, in which the Presi- dent's husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, and Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos have been implicated.

Neri's testimony critical

The lifting of the presidential ban on Neri's appearance at the Senate inquiry is considered by political and civic society observers as by the key that would unlock doors evidence from Neri, in contrast to the hearsay testi- mony so far presented.

Those who have heeded Neri's discre- tion, if he were allowed by the court, as crucial in giving credibility to allegations of irregularities sur- rounding the NBN contract.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines has urged the Presi- dent to abolish EO 464 in allow offi- cials, including Neri, to reveal be- hind details on the NBN deal in the interests for truth rather than to pursue another campaign for people power which they hinted might "weaken our democratic institutions."

Biggest protest

A group of academics in Ateneo de Manila University has echoed the same demand.

Those actors believe that the removal of the embargo of EO 464 would unleash a flood of unrelated information on the net- work deal. They expect Neri's confirmed testimony to fling wide open the floodgates of derogatory information that could fuel the public unrest over corruption and to- tenally the momentum for another people power.

We are blind to realize if we don't recog- nize that the inevitable rally in Makati City on Friday marshaled the biggest protest ac- tion against the administration since the last crisis of the arroyo regime in July 2005.

Conservative police estimates placed the crowd at 11,000 to 20,000, but this figure cannot be correct as it represents the tip of a growing outrage over the corruption scandal overlooking from the ZTE deal.

The Arroyo administration is glossing that Friday's rally failed to muster a target- 100,000 crowd assemblage—not soon enough the more than a million who flooded EDSA in February 1986 to overthrow the Ferdinand Marcos dictatorship, and not im- pressive enough to trigger mass defection in the security forces and the bureaucracy as in People Power II in 2001 that catapult- ed Mr. to power.

Bishops' phony rhetoric

The showdown in the streets of Makati during the 22nd anniversary of EDSA I re- vealed the limits of people power as an ex- traconstitutional mode to bring down **abominably unpopular regimes.**

His stance that the Catholic bishops called only for "constitutional method" in the search of truth in the NBN scandal, they buried their heads in the sand and refused to call a spade a spade. In their perversion- sion, they hid behind their phony rhetoric, although they really wished another people power to materialize.

Despite this semblessness, the fact, after- lass week's "noise but tape" from civil soci- ety groups demanding the exit of the Ar- royo regime, is people power basically re- mains a non-born game in the streets.

This is the seasonal classic of power **tussure in Philippine electoral democracy** over the past 22 years. The threats that power flows from the hatred of the gun, if not, the muzzle of the snake, is sublime iron logic of bal- ancing charge during the past two decades.

People power, not a trained regime, is still the name of the game in ripping the balance of power between a repressive and corrupt regime and civil society movements seek- ing regime change. Civil society cannot be content with halfway measures to mobilize power. It must go all the way with it or not try it at all, and halfway measures are dou- bleed only to bad, as it did on Friday.

Opposition split over Noli ...

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INQUIRER

OPINION

Your views on the issues

Noli

IN HIS WEEKLY RADIO SHOW THE OTHER DAY, Vice President Noli de Castro made a carefully calibrated distinction. Responding to questions about the possibility that he may succeed to the presidency if the current political crisis worsens, he said he was prepared, but not preparing, to take over Malacañang.

"Iba yung naghahanda at handa (There's a difference between preparing and being prepared)."

EDITORIAL

His statement was obviously designed to soothe anxiety on both sides of the political divide. When he said that he was not preparing for the possibility, he meant that he shared Malacañang's upbeat political assessment: President Macapagal-Arroyo will survive this crisis.

On the other hand, when he said that he was "already prepared" to assume the presidency "from Day 1," he meant that he recognized the reservations of some in the opposition—that he was a political lightweight, and unqualified to assume the presidency.

"From Day 1, I already know my duties under the Constitution as the elected Vice President. I'm prepared for that," he said.

For better or for worse, De Castro was elected to the vice presidency in 2004. It is a mock which choice rival Sen. Loren Legarda ventured, not without reason or evidence, but by virtue of the final decision of the Presidential Electoral Tribunal, it is an election which it is our duty to recognize.

Precisely because of his election, we must also recognize De Castro as someone whom a plurality of voters in 2004 deemed ready to assume the presidency at a moment's notice. This is no idle notion. In our short history, four vice presidents have succeeded presidents who died in office or abandoned it. Mr. Arroyo herself followed that route to power. Untimely succession, in other words, is a very real constant in Filipino voters.

All this manuevering to keep De Castro from succeeding to the presidency, in the worst history calls for it, strikes us therefore as deeply undemocratic. If Mr. Arroyo resigns, her successor has already been ordained by the Constitution and chosen by the electorate. Do we simply ignore the will of the people because we think De Castro is unqualified?

The opposition has not done itself any favors with the call of some of its members for a snap election. To use this pre-Edsa option, our post-Edsa polity needs to have both the President and the Vice President resign and an enabling law passed. But why? There is no showing that De Castro is involved in the corruption scandals that have deepened the President's legitimacy crisis. If the scandals force Mr. Arroyo to resign, the succession is already in place.

We should be wary of messengers proclaiming the gospel of snap elections.

Other oppositionists worry that a De Castro presidency, however abbreviated, will derail campaign plans for 2010. As an incumbent President who can run for election in his own right, De Castro may prove to be a much more formidable foe than he is now.

We think their worries may be misplaced. In the first place, lasting damage to Malacañang will be the surest guarantee we can have that the 2010 presidential contest will take place as scheduled. (There will be no snap election or poll a lot one and change the Constitution.) And if De Castro is as incompetent as some people think he is, their opposition candidates will have even better chances in 2010.

But it must be noted that it is not only leading opposition who worry about the De Castro factor. Many in the administration think of him as the President's best insurance policy, as long as many Filipinos continue to express reservations about his competence, the calls for the President to resign will always be muffled. For them, De Castro's role is that of the loyal subaltern, a living reminder of the incumbent's incomparable competence. Thus, even a potentially disruptive statement like De Castro's "prepared, but not preparing" declaration can discomfit them—it threatens the viability of the insurance policy.

The other week, De Castro became the target, once again, of another wound of intrigues. It should be instructive to trace the source. Who stands to keep him mostly where he is?

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GMA insulted all housewives

MARCH IS WOMEN'S MONTH, OR MAYBE, it should be celebrating womanhood, and President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo advised the women to be smiling housewives when she told Gina de Venecia, "You are just a housewife, [say the President]."

"But I'm [emphatic]," She is belittling housewives without which she would not have been born and which she is not now. At least one-fourth of the population are housewives (or at least calls one President. As a general rule, all housewives are honest, humble, hard-working, and believe in God's commandment "Thou shalt not steal" which prevents them steadily do not.

It is the housewife who rocks the cradle, and without whom there would be no family and no nation. Housewives are the backbone of the but life and upbringing to a housewife. Children and parentage can in housewives to help and wisdom for many people only curse their President and want her to go away—as was done last Feb. 25 in the Philippines. Indeed, she'd rather have a pious, loving housewife than a lying, thieving President.

I don't know what the women will do—especially women's groups like Gabriela—to that insult to them, and on Women's Month yet. Pill they take it coming down!

* * *

I don't know how GMA can stay in Malacañang one moment longer when she can say how much Filipinos hate her. Although that such pains us to say away and pretended it was business as usual for her, she was munching television and she saw the huge crowd in Makati all demanding that she resign. Many more stayed at home and followed the huge protests by watching TV, but they shared the sentiments of those in the rallies.

How's only in Metro Manila, GMA's ratings have ever but we have seen the "Gloria Heritage" tallies on all over the country—and even in Filipino communities in America. How can she stay in Malacañang when she can see and hear very clearly that her resignation is what has to go away? Her instinct is not told me, "That's why others say you are not trained." Didn't her mother teach her that?

* * *

THAT THIRD REMEDY: TO STOP THE rally, or at least stop it from becoming the flood of humanity it became.

They used warning people of the curses, a couple of nights before, last Wednesday check-points had already sprung up all over Metro Manila. I know because I was at a couple of them at about midnight. The cops manning them were checkpoints, but that did not make up for the not very pleasant style of those in the dead of night. Rudeness, forbidden under law, is added in the form of threats, which seeing beats firearms. The killers who accumulated behind my window and me I should automatically search all my lights and lower my window whenever I approached a checkpoint. I told him—after showing him my press card of course—I have no shot evidence—that as far as I know people did this only when entering military camps. I asked him if we were already under martial law and Metro Manila had been turned into a military camp. He shrugged my comments off and waved me on.

They stopped people outside Metro Manila from joining the march. The day before, the military and police were already in full force holding people down in their trucks for hours and much of the capital. Edsa Villanueva would-be-ists in the rally had to take time-tasks would have certified like God's search if they can of search but managed to get through. Last I looked, at the Constitution, the Bill of Rights could not be suspended, and a rights are generally assemble. Preventing people from doing so because they might not be peaceable is prior censorship. I don't know why the Lawyers aren't busy right now badgering the Supreme Court to issue a writing stopping this nonsense.

They threw a security fog around Malacañang this morning during Edsa and it may relenting to the PDP and APP were prepared to deal with troublemakers at the rally—as a public thing because the only troublemakers to be found there were those who proposed to deal with them. As the Manila mayor colonel from the MRT

Truth serum

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

to Makati. I saw Gazmin's file-size rumors from my window, but by the time the Philippine Police" an officer regular possibly a former cop got to me to tell to join the Antidote-saying group to authorize into your friendly neighborhood protesters-preachers. It not made our number equal to what happened to him. (Action of "Marginal Police," all would think that's the Philippine Police, all would think.)

Or is this case. "Pulis, pulis, gang mundo."

They used everything, and still they got nothing.

So by and behold, as that magical line in "Field of Dreams" puts it, "If you build it, they will come." And come they did, from far and wide—or at least as far as the freeways people could squeeze through the police cinch. But there was no mistaking the wide fanbase, from students to professionals, from workers to lawyers, housewives to mothers, students, housewives, homeboys-hoods, students-hoods, even the office of nuns, faithfuls, they are certain, nuns, reporters, retarded couples, and senior-citizens come, and they seemed all to be there to say one thing: that they were not to be denied any more. The numbers themselves would overwhelm their tanks or unload for their archaic pools. The police would say 40,000. But what was only about the police had previewed ABS-CBN from flying a helicopter above Ayala to take an aerial view of the crowd and let the public judge for itself. Last I looked me, the Bill of Rights said the press had the right to be free and the people to know. I don't know why the media people seem more curiously preoccupied by suicide.

The commentators—or bombs—corner of the GMA house that other set stand today is not to set her to discuss, not to link GMA out to the corner for to fuck trash into our heads. A commentator noticed by the lightest at Cinco and El Shaddai, all of whom manages to make a monstrous case for converting to Buddhism or just atheism. You cannot discern the truth right before your eyes, you do not need to pass you senses to see an opinionator. Although it's the kind saying goes, "The hardest person to wake up is the one pretending to be asleep." The hardest person to wake up is the one pretending to be blind.

There and there last Friday you saw and heard and smelled and tasted and felt Truth, truth as you had never done before. There before your eyes the words the whole truth and nothing but the truth. There in front, beside, and behind you was the greatest, dogged and unstoppable learning of the truth. The truth of a gang of criminals desperately trying to hide the truth, and truth of a state people joyfully proclaiming their unity. The truth of hell and heaven, the truth of death and resurrection, the truth of Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

There and there before you was the truth of a free president ordering her officials to not oppose its public revolt the truth, the truth of separate people coming together to form a nation, the truth of a people who would not call the truth, the truth of an awakened nation come to build a scaffolding for the truth.

For the first time in a long time, I believed again in the power of those words: The truth shall set you free.

An EO 464 catechism

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

Unpublished hearings have served an important role in elucidating issues of profound national concern. In fact, the modern function of hearings is often simply to give the informed electorate and place a pressing issue on the nation's agenda. Some might say that, in certain legislative sessions, such consciousness-raising tasks among Congress' most conservative accomplishments.

—Lawrence Tribe

MAGUIN MUP THE CATECHIST IN MEANINGLE some one, but there is so much confusion about EO 464 that I thought the catechetical method might be the clearest approach. So, here goes:

Q. Is Executive Order 464 still alive?

A. Yes, it is still in effect.

Q. The Supreme Court in Neri vs. Senate said that "Sections 2(b) and 3 of Executive Order No. 464 ... are declared VOID. Sections 1 and 2(a) are, however, VALID."

Q. What does the voided Section 3 say?

A. It says: "All public officials enumerated in Section 2 (b) hereof shall secure prior consent of the President prior to appearing before either House of Congress to ensure the observance of the principle of separation of powers, adherence to the rule on executive privilege and respect for the rights of public officials appearing in inquiries in aid of legislation."

Q. Who are the officials in Section 2(b) to which the voided Section 3 was?

A. They are:

1. Senior officials of executive departments who in the judgment of the department heads are covered by the executive privilege;

2. Generals and flag officers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and such other officers who in the judgment of the Chief of Staff are covered by the executive privilege; and

3. Philippine National Police (PNP) officers with rank of chief superintendent or higher and such other officers who in the judgment of the Chief of the PNP are covered by the executive privilege.

4. Senior national security officials who in the judgment of the National Security Advisor are covered by the executive privilege; and

5. Such other officers as may be determined by the President.

Q. Are there any officials whom the President may prevent from testifying?

A. If the hearing is an inquiry in the exercise of congressional "oversight function" under Article VI, Section 21, Department Secretaries may not appear without the prior consent of the President. This is repeated in Section 3 of EO 464 which the Supreme Court declared void.

If the hearing is "in aid of legislation" under Article VI, Section 21 of the Constitution, anyone, except the President and Justices of the Supreme Court, may be summoned.

Q. If the President cannot use EO 464 to block the testimony of officials enumerated in Section 2(b) above, can she still prevent testimony?

A. Yes, by claiming that the testimony being sought is covered by executive privilege.

Q. What is "executive privilege"?

A. It is the constitutionally recognized right of the President to withhold certain types of information from Congress, the courts or from the public.

Q. What types of information can be covered by executive privilege?

A. Section 2(a) of EO 464, upheld as valid by the Supreme Court, enumerates the following which are taken from earlier decisions:

1. Conversations and correspondence between the President and the public official covered by this executive order;

2. Military, diplomatic and other national security matters which in the interest of national security should not be divulged;

3. Information between inter-government agencies prior to the conclusion of treaties and executive agreements;

4. Discussion in closed door Cabinet meetings;

5. Matters affecting national security and public order.

Q. What are these executive privileges?

A. Only the President or a high official who, after consultation with the President, is authorized by her can claim the privileges.

Q. Must every claim of executive privilege be made by the above-named officials?

A. No. The Court in Senate v. Ermita said that in determining the validity of a claimed privilege, the question that must be asked is not only whether the requested information falls within one of the traditional privileges, but also whether that privilege is properly invoked in a given procedural setting. Thus it is not for one claiming executive privilege "to unilaterally determine that a duly issued subpoena should be totally disregarded."

Q. Who then determines whether the claimed privilege should be honored?

A. The Court. Thus, for instance, when the Senate administration claimed privilege for certain files about the Watergate break-in, the Court, after looking at the claimed privilege behind closed doors, held that the tapes were not covered by executive privilege and ordered their release.

For this reason, one Court also said that "there is then a statement of the specific basis of a claim of executive privilege, there is no way of determining whether it falls under one of the traditional privileges, or whether, given the circumstances in which it is made, it should be respected." The task of specificity renders an assessment of the privilege's claim resulting from disclosure impossible.

Q. What was the opening sentence of the Court in its decision on EO 464?

A. "In our system of government is one of the hallmarks of a truly republican state."

Q. The President has formed a legal team to study what to do with the appeal of the Bishops to abrogate EO 464. What should they say?

A. They should say, Madam President, you have already explained it and thereby begin the process of your salvation."

The story behind the AFP-PNP unity walk

LAST WEEK AS PART OF THE CELEBRATIONS MARKING the 22nd anniversary of the Edsa Revolt, AFP chief of staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. and Philippine National Police Director Avelino Razon Jr., along with other senior commanders of their organizations, linked arms in "hoyt-hoy" style and staged a "unity walk" from the Edsa shrine to Camp Aguinaldo.

That followed a flag-raising ceremony and a re-enactment by former Presidente Fidel Ramos of his historic "pump for joy" on being informed that President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo had finally left the room 23 February 1986. Unfortunately upon returning to his offices in Camp Crame, the television showed that Marcos was still in room and FVR realized there remained much work to be done.

REVERLLE

Ramon J. Farolan

The AFP-PNP "unity walk" was the same after a "solidarity walk" by members of the Armed Enlisted last Tuesday, Feb. 19. On this walk through the circular driveway of the Palace grounds to the Gate House, Ms Arroyo was flanked on her right by CHDef Dato Romulo Neri, the man who could declare the coup de grace if he spoke up. Perhaps, that is why she kept looking to her left to see if Dato was behind her, or to whether he had called his cell. He left was Vice President Noli de Castro, a potential successor should she falter along the way. Immediately behind were the guardians of her presidency—Esperon and Razon, with Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr.

It is important to appreciate the relative positions of these participants in the unity walk opportunity orchestrated by the Palace. While it was billed as a show of unity and solidarity, it unwittingly revealed the insecurities and fears of a besieged presidency. Earlier, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita had read a manifesto pledging "full support and loyalty" to the President.

All those exuberant expressions of allegiance and support for the President should not be taken too seriously. They are in keeping with the saying, "walk the talk," meaning your actions should reflect your words. But as we all know from past experience, when the stated course is blow in the opposite direction, the hapless will also tend to the same direction.

In February 1986, I distinctly recall that as the gathering storm grew darker, President Marcos assembled senior generals behind him before the television cameras, a solid phalanx of stars to show that he had the support of the military organization. In less than a week, most of the major unit commanders had moved over to the Enrile-Ramos fusion and by the time Cory Aquino was sworn in as President at Club Filipino, the armed forces leadership had changed hands.

In January 2001, Gen. Angelo Reyes, then the AFP chief of staff, in spite of President Joseph Estrada having his Lampitd-in an endless wedding ceremony (how much crazier can one get), declined to withdraw his support from his Lampitd's and the whole AFP went along without a shot being fired.

In both cases, the military intervened but not for themselves. They grabbed power and could have easily held on but unlike in other countries, they restored power to civilians who they believed represented the best interests of our people.

This before the recent statement by a high ranking AFP official that military intervention has weakened our democratic institutions. It is true that (were) the most critical constitutional bodies of the land have been emasculated in recent times. The Commission on Elections is one of them. But this has taken place not because of military intervention but because of the greed, the corruption and the abuse of power by the officials of the Executive Department and the Congress. Institutions that has lost much of its credibility. This has is not due to military intervention but to the result of its selective and cruel punishment of justice.

Some people say the military should have clung to power as in the case of Indonesia, Thailand and South Korea. But in these cases, the men in uniform were back in the barracks, maybe not to the extent as in the past. Some remain in government, but not as members of a civilian bureaucracy. There are reports of highly placed, Spanish-speaking individuals referring to our soldiers as "los machaditos." Whatever the exact "machadito" may mean in Spanish, these characters do not grant credit to their views accurately.

Perhaps it is again time to bring up the question which has haunted us for the past two years: "Why does the military intervene in politics?" The noted Harvard scholar Samuel Huntington provides the classic reply: "What closes the civil-free into the political arena is not his core strength but rather the weakness of the political system."

The present set-up remains a system which continues to exploit the weaknesses of our people. Each new election, instead of being a means to empower the people, is used instead as subverting the people's will. This system must change. But even more important, our people must change and this can take place only under a leadership that holds the moral high ground, and one beset by questions of integrity or credibility. Certainly not one that has placed all forms of obstacles in the search for truth and accountability, at times resorting to a couple of lies to muddle the issues. Someone said that the difference between the truth and a lie is that truth has one story while a lie has great speed.

Salute to the Filipino youth

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Carlos Isagani T. Zarate

"TURNING HIS BACK ON US IS AN ULTIMATE act of cowardice," Makati Jaycee Oats Lumacho, school council president of UP-Mindanao, said angrily after Child Chair Bonnie Siri stopped enraged students in a car and minute chase during last Friday's 10-board of Regents meeting in Davao City.

Reports said Siri earlier agreed to meet the students, who wanted to confront him on the rising cost of college education and for him to tell all on the "immediate grants [will] MIR ITE deal." But, in the end, Siri, who was immediately whisked off by his security escorts after the meeting, surrendered to "romantic cowardice" in "confronting the issues," leaving unmet UP Professor Brian Katelyn Tapa. "He evaded the encounter and this deprived the public, the students, of the truth. Why run, anyway?"

The "run, Siri, run" incident at UP-Mindanao happened in the middle of nationwide student rallies highlighted by the one held in Makati, many said was the "strongest rejection yet" shown by the people against the Arroyo administration in the past years following the "Hello, Garci" scandal. Many have also considered it as the beginning of the end of Arroyo.

Last 30 March nationwide student rallies, highlighted by the one held in Makati, many said was the "strongest rejection yet" shown by the people against the Arroyo administration in the past years following the "Hello, Garci" scandal. Many have also considered it as the beginning of the end of Arroyo.

That the supposed lethargic student and youth movement has found a new spark...quite an even bigger one...is one welcome piece of good news in these truly bad times. Now, we can start to imagine and believe once again, as we did in the past, that the Filipinos can still chart a different and better course for our country. That the student, youth and student movement showed that even Days just donning or owning the latest Singapore that the modern world can offer, it is within their collective power to demand and organize their future.

Indeed, the militancy of the youth and students has always been an essential part of our country's political history: from the Isko-akbid, ng Katipunerong who fought the colonialist Spaniards and Americans to the celebrated wits of the student who fought Joseph Estrada out of Malacañang in 2001. The First Quarter Storm is the early point of the '70s had been fired, too, by youth activists that eventually resulted in the course of the hated Marcos dictatorship regime.

No doubt, the youth's militancy, idealism and the crusader's instinct is addresses calls for accountability and of legitimacy will only further the peoples' outrage. The people should not lose sight, though, of the fact that corruption became the hallmark of the Arroyo administration even before all of the latter's power. While it readily accept under the cop these charges of massive corruption, the tyrant administration even now has been wrested to an obsession to stay and to perpetuate itself in power via the backing of its allies in the military and police establishment.

But, beyond the issue of corruption, the people, the youth particularly, must continue to make the present administration accountable for its equally "sinful" acts: selling our country's patrimony and sovereignty by, for example, allowing the continued and rampant presence of foreign troops, particularly in Mindanao, allowing foreigners the exploitation of our resources, like mine foreigners using companies are doing now in several parts of Mindanao and what China is about to do in the Spratlys and the issue of the still unresolved cases of extra-judicial killings and enforced disappearances of activists, journalists, lawyers and church people.

As a salute to the youth and students who were "united" by the firm determination to make a stand" against the tyrant in power, I offer you the following (as rephrased) version of a portion of a letter written in 1933 by the famous American satirist Horace S. Thompson:

"Mar, Filipino youth, you finally awakened from your slumber of lethargy and hastened to the call of your conscience. It was then you realized that you have to do something now for your country other wise your self rapidly become a doomed generation! You finally realized that your fate and of generation to come was on your shoulders and count. It was then that you decided to unite with the different sectors of your country and reach out to others to yourself! You finally realized that you have been sulled on to protect your country from the creeping scourge of immoderate greed and corruption and fascism! You then hailed arms

Arroyo's reign of witches

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO and her bunch of political propagandists are breaking their heads for new ideas to prevent the EDSA commemoration from overtaking her mass protests in a full-scale rebellion, which may hasten the political downfall of this corrupt and criminal government.

But their problem is homegrown, as exemplified by Albay Gov. Joey Salceda, one of Ms Arroyo's economic advisers. Salceda recently called his own principal "a bitch," after former Iloilo chief and now COMELEC chief Romulo "Rom" Neri's alleged descriptions of her as "evil." Malacañang spinmeisters have just tried a lot cuter to Ms Arroyo's nails, labelled "the evil witch," which will cradle through the pages of our history books.

The Arroyo administration arrogantly believes that Filipinos can no longer harness their collective anger to unseat another corrupt, arrogant and evil government. The Arroyo administration thinks that all Filipinos are downright stupid and brain-dead.

The capitalist Malacañang's cousin and son of Biden's Big Lie: the bigger the lie and the more of it you tell, the gullible will eventually believe it. In Malacañang invented the fairy tale—not knowing they are merely stealing it as an appointment with a final destiny.

Thomas Jefferson once called the Adams government "the reign of witches," the apt and colorful characterization of our own government.

—RICARDO M. CRASTRAJE
wildbird@yahoo.com

Has Lozada been playing us for fools all along?

I AGREE WITH DELFIN COLMENARES-CUNANAN that, indeed, Rodolfo Lozada Jr.'s "*ten minutes of fame* makes him appear believable. ("Whatever," 3/1/08, 2/13/08)

He sure certainly matching the line released of the—where Secretary Lozada and executive Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos. At the start, I was under the impression that Lozada should be given the benefit of the doubt. After all, his coming out heralded his secrets and many revelations.

Sadly, however, at one point in the program—where Abalos was talking about how good the hamburgers at his daughter's canteen in Black Sand was—we saw Lozada making faces in the background. I realized then that the benefit of the doubt should be given to the administration.

When Lozada was told he was on TV, he said he was not aware—but he was also on air. How can an IT expert not know that it is possible for a TV station to simultaneously show on air two persons in different places?

Lozada's seemingly innocent comment cast a dark cloud on his credibility. Has he been playing us for fools all along? I have been encountering the SSS hearing at the Senate and the more I hear Lozada's testimony, the more I realize that he is enjoying every minute of it. Maybe, there is truth to our perceptions—unpopular though it may be—that Lozada is part of a grand conspiracy to destabilize the present government. Sadly this is not being shared by those who have been ranting, before the media, against the government.

Pls. dream of a better country to live in, not only for ourselves but also for our children and their children. We fervently pray that our incomes soon behold. But allowing a few people to use us, make fun of us and play God with our future will not lead us to this dream. That will keep us from this dream.

—FRANCO SENECA,
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Commonwealth Heights Subd.,
Quezon City

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Country was never cleansed of Pre-Edsa I sins

THIS IS A REACTION TO FORMER PRESIDENT Fidel Ramos' comment that pre-Edsa I era are back. (Inquirer, 2/13/08)

After the 1986 People Power revolt, I had great expectations that the injustices and abuses would change and corruption vanish. Then several unsuccessful coup attempts were staged, and after six threatening years nothing changed in our society, except the faces of people in our corrupt bureaucracy.

The era of pre-Edsa I continued to thrive through Corazon Aquino's presidency up to Ramos' time and Joseph Estrada's short-lived Malacañang term.

Instead of lambasting Rodolfo "Jun" Lozada and all those useless and expensive Senate investigations, why don't we ask President Macapagal-Arroyo or ex-Army Gen. Angelo Reyes to publicly declare their denials in public the deep-rooted corruption in government? From there, we can decide what course of action to take. No more corruption was not eradicated even after two People Power uprisings.

Siv's discourses should be moderated by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, not by politicians. I do still have much hope in my beloved country. I and my wife are planning to spend the rest of our lives there after we retire.

God bless and more power to the silent majority. Mabuhay ang overseas Filipino workers!

—LEO TOBIAS,
11106 Broadway Blvd.,
Tucson, AZ, USA

PVAO wants copy of claim or more details

THIS IS IN CONNECTION WITH REGIE Medina's letter (Inquirer, 1/30/08) regarding his grandfather's application for old-age pension. He said that because the processing of the claim was delayed, his grandfather died without receiving any benefits.

May we request Mr. Medina to provide us a copy of his grandfather's application or the complete name of his grandfather and the address given in the application. He may send the same by e-mail to ano_nato@yahoo.com or call us at telephone number 925-6888, Office of Public and Legislative Affairs, PVAO.

On the question of whether his mother, who is already a senior citizen, is eligible for those benefits due Medina's deceased grandfather, that will depend on the result of the evaluation of the application, if application is approved. The next of kin of the grandfather may file for accrued pension.

—ERNESTO G. EMBOLINA,
undersecretary,
OIC, Veterans and Reserve Affairs, DND;
officer in charge,
Philippine Veterans Affairs Office;
Camp Emilio Aguinaldo, QC

Teachers want results from GSIS, not paid ads

THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE System (www.gsis.gov.ph) ran an open letter (Inquirer, 2/22/08) with a half page paid ad (Inquirer, 2/26/08) to long and comprehensive explanations, which included some charts and figures showing its gains, was simply nonsense to the teachers and other GSIS members. After a series of dialogues with the GSIS, we have memorized its arguments and lines. That's the way we the members are treated talking to GSIS officials; we have no more room for another dialogue with them.

What we need is a GSIS that fulfills its promise to resolve the teachers' perennial concerns relative to their GSIS membership and benefits. What we need is to see a corporate positive result of the Jan. 11, 2008 dialogue we had with the GSIS, the Department of Education and President Macapagal-Arroyo.

If the system the GSIS is bragging about is really responsive to the needs of its members, then why is the number of members' complaints increasing? The fewer the complaints the better the system—that is the measure of a good system.

The GSIS should have also presented in their paid ad a statistical chart showing the number of members' complaints, particularly from the teachers' ranks. We are sure that such a chart will show a drastic increase in the number of complainants from the time Winston Garcia assumed office as president and general manager of the GSIS.

The GSIS, in the ad's last part, wondered aloud how the Manila Public School Teachers Association (MPSTA) could afford to put a full-page ad. We could have that ad published every day if our members want, because many of us advise the GSIS' premier system. In fact, we are planning to come up with another ad to tell the public about our grievances against the GSIS. For that, the money we are going to use will legitimately come from our own pockets (₱50 per member).

What about the money the GSIS spends for its ads? That comes from our monthly contributions.

In its justification, the GSIS implied that we, the teachers, are delinquent borrowers and members. That is why some of our loaned loans have been foreclosed and some of our benefits have been withheld. It's as if the GSIS is telling the public that we do not know what we are complaining about. This is outright disrespect (Filipino: *kabastusan*).

We are teachers, and we have enough wisdom to understand and distinguish what is just and unjust regarding our duties.

Without the teachers, the GSIS is nothing. Whereas, the GSIS is an additional burden to the teachers.

—MERARDO T. MERCADO,
president,
Manila Public School
Teachers Association (MPSTA),
#12 G.M. Tolentino St. Sampaloc, Manila

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NEWSBRIEFS

■ BACOLOD CITY

Armed men raid police station

ARMED men claiming to be New People's Army rebels raided a crowded police outpost in Barangay Villa, Sagay City, Negros Occidental at past 6 p.m. on Feb. 29, and took two M-14 rifles.

Sagay police chief Supt. William Barbarona said they arrived in an unmarked van and ordered the police personnel and detainees in the jail to surrender. Only one officer was hurt in the incident.

Their companions surrounded the outpost.

The raiders also took police uniforms before fleeing on board a pump boat, Barbarona said.

The new policeman on duty tried to pursue the attackers but the prisoners of many civilians escaped their cells to help their patrols, Barbarona said.

Police were still investigating if the raiders were indeed NPA members or belonged to the same group who raided the Sagay Marine Sanctuary last year.

CHEVY DONAC, INQUIRER VISAYAS

■ ZAMBOANGA CITY

6 hurt in blast in rideside bar

SIX PEOPLE, including two soldiers, were wounded during an explosion inside a videoke bar near the main military headquarters in Jolo, Sulu, at around 9:30 p.m. on Saturday.

Police said they were still trying to determine if the explosive behind the explosion, which was allegedly caused by a homemade bomb.

The wounded soldiers were inside the bar when the explosion occurred while the civilian victims, all of them women, reportedly work for the establishment.

Maj. Noel Tilmon, spokesperson of Task Force Comet, identified the soldiers as Pfc Mark Anthony Taborno, 20, and Pfc Jun Cary, 25.

Jolo Mayor Hussin Amin said he ordered the closure of entertainment establishments near the military camp in Barangay Bus-bus shortly after a bomb exploded inside a videoke bar on Feb. 16, 2008. One person was killed and 28 others were wounded.

John Unson, Inquirer Mindanao

CEBU CAR SMUGGLING TRY

Gov't blacklists 4 companies

By Margie C. Ortiz

THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS HAS BLACKLISTED four firms for their alleged involvement in the foiled smuggling of P10 million worth of sports utility vehicles (SUVs) at the port of Cebu.

Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales said his agency would also cancel the accreditation of IOC Trading, TRIO Eve Auto, MGM Trading and CHLI Surplus.

"The shipment is considered abandoned because the customs didn't file import entries. But the owners of these firms appeared in the shipment's inward manifest so they can no longer transact in the bureau," Morales said.

Members of the bureau's X-Ray Scanning Project led by Ma. Leonilo Mangayong intercepted the eight 40-foot containers vans loaded with 30 SUVs. The contents had been declared as used truck replacement parts, Mangayong said.

Her team intercepted the shipment on Feb. 8 after receiving information that smuggled cars from Korea and Japan would arrive at the port.

Among those seized were four new Hyundai Starex vans; a used Kia Sportage, Mitsubishi Jiguru and Isuzu Trooper; and a light-hand-drive Honda CPO.

Nine of cars and one motorcycle were also found in the other containers.

Mangayong disclosed that the shipment arrived between Jan. 28 and Feb. 7 on board the Maui Trader, Uni Active and Eagle Excellence vessels.

She said X-ray images revealed that the containers were loaded with completely built motor vehicles.

"The shipment was placed on red alert due to the general description of the goods. The consignee violated Customs Administrative Order 6, 2007, which orders for the exact description of goods to tariff terms," she said.

Mangayong recently issued a memorandum to Cebu placing under full examination and X-ray scanning all shipments declared as personal effects and replacement car parts following reports of rampant smuggling of luxury cars in the region.

The bureau will fully utilize the X-ray scanning machines to combat smuggling of motor vehicles and other high value and highly dutiable goods in Cebu and other ports," she said.

She ordered X-ray field officers to scan all shipment from high-risk countries.

DA still sees rice growth despite floods

By Vivienne S. Lobro
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—DESPITE the floods that affected more than 36,000 hectares of rice lands in four provinces in Eastern Visayas, a top official of the Department of Agriculture is optimistic the region will still post a positive rice production growth this semester.

Ben Rollon Ayson III, chief of DA-8 research division, said the agency's current problem was the scarcity of certified seeds that could be used to replant flood-damaged rice fields.

Under its emergency agricultural rehabilitation program, the DA said it would need some P7 million in procure rice seed other seeds, as well as medicines that include antibiotics and anti-hemorrhagicsmoss and anti-fungi chokes drugs for animals.

Ayson, who is also the regional coordinator of the Command Mungayong Ani rice program, said that with the crop damages, production area already 53,477 metric tons or 0.38 percent of the growth that the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics projected for the first half.

The BAS has expected rice production to reach 956,863 MT during the period, but the target was now down to 923,396 MT. The downgraded projection, however, is still an 8.99-percent growth over that of the same period in 2007, he said.

"[But] would still be a positive growth for the first semester" despite the flooding, Ayson said.

In 2007, the region's rice production was 946,000 MT, of which more than 368,000 MT was produced in the first semester.

Ayson said the flooding that destroyed rice crops affected 9,775 ha of rice lands in Eastern Samar, 45,017 ha in Leyte, 3,016 ha in Northern Samar, and 238 ha in Samar.

Crop destruction was valued at more than P11B million, broken down as follows: Eastern Samar, P79.62 million; Leyte, P11.04 million; Northern Samar, P17.38 million; Samar (P601,377), according to a DA report.

Ayson said damages in badly hit Eastern Samar represented 58 percent of the total, while Leyte's was 30 percent.

Ayson said 10,273 ha, or 10.76 percent, of the affected rice lands had "no chance of recovery" while the remaining 6,209 ha had a good chance for them were submerged for just a couple of hours before the floodwater subsided.

The four provinces incurred damages in corn (worth P1.22 million), vegetables (P6.4 million), fruit trees (P4.03 million), other high-value commercial crops (P3.33 million), and livestock (P1.5 million).

A total of 13,165 rice farmers and 666 corn farmers were affected, Ayson said.

Army exec changes tune on Sulu killings report

Illegal fishing back in Tayabas Bay, group says

LUCENA CITY—AN ENVIRONMENTAL group has expressed alarm over the resurgence of illegal commercial fishing in the Tayabas Bay, threatening again the newfound safe haven of endangered marine species and the livelihood of poor fishermen.

"The return of destructive fishing activities imperils the bright prospect of the bay as an emerging safe refuge of threatened marine species," Glenn Forbes, coastal and marine program officer of Tanggol Kalikasan (TK), a public environmental legal defense center, told the reporters on Saturday.

He warned that the resurgence of illegal commercial fishing could once more deprive the small fishermen of their share of the marine bounties.

A composite team of provincial environment officials, police, volunteers and environmentalists caught two commercial fishing vessels inside the territorial waters of Pagbilao town and Lucena City.

The FB Johna Rose was caught fishing near the shore of Barangay Polo in Pagbilao, Forbes added.

Another vessel, the FB Gloria Fe, reportedly owned by Polly Magadia, based in nearby Barangay Dalahican here, was caught near the area.

The Fisheries Code of 1998 (Republic Act No. 8550) prohibits commercial fishing vessels from operating within 10 kilometers of municipal waters.

The apprehended vessels were escorted to the Dalahican wharf.

Arrested were Cesly Isldro, boat captain, and Elven Reyna, master fisherman, both of the Johna Rose; and Elton Indronelo, boat captain, and Joel Eto, master fisherman of the Gloria Fe.

The arresting team found that the fishermen were using fine mesh nets, which is banned under Sections 89 and 90 of the Fisheries Code. —Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

LA UNION DAY
Women carry assorted vegetables abundant in La Union as they dance during the festivities of the 106th Foundation Day of the province.

DepEd relaunches program to reduce illiteracy

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—THE GOVERNment is bent on reducing by half the country's illiteracy rate by 2015 as it encourages both the local government and the private sector to help in the undertaking.

The 2015 target was set under the United Nations' Millennium Development Goal.

Wilnida Sanchez, consultant of the Literacy Coordinating Council, an attached agency of the Department of Education, said the LCC relaunched the National Literacy Award and invited all LGUs and the private sector to come up with programs and projects to uplift the literacy rates in their areas.

The 2000 Functional Literacy Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS) conducted by the National Statistics Office shows that the illiteracy rate in the country stood at 11.9 percent, which means that about 6.59 million Filipinos did not know how to read and write.

Another FLEMMS, which is conducted every five years, will be held in November, she said.

Sanchez said the DepEd would also intensify its alternative learning education system that provided basic education to out-of-school youths for 10 months.

The DepEd has assigned mobile teachers to areas with high illiteracy rate so they could reach young people or out-of-school youths, using modules in math, science, literacies and Filipino that the DepEd uses with regular students.

In Eastern Visayas, about 4,500 out-of-school youths are enrolled under the alternative learning education system, said Imelda Salinas, chief of the program of the DepEd regional office.

"We are focusing on far-flung barangays where there are no schools as this is where the prevalence of high illiteracy is toward," Salinas said.

Eastern Visayas has one of the highest illiteracy rates at 21 percent based on the 2000 survey. Poverty, remoteness and poor nutrition were among the reasons cited by the LCC for the high illiteracy rate.

ZAMBOANGA CITY—THE MILITARY TESTIMONY said the report about the deaths of eight people, including two children and a pregnant woman in Mahalmong, Sulu that is released last month was not yet final.

In a hastily conducted press conference here, Lt. Gen. Nelson Allaga, chief of the Western Mindanao Command, said the report only covered the initial investigation and that the military had never cleared these casualties.

The eight victims, one of them a vendee, were wounded up by the soldiers and deliberately killed, according to residents.

In its report, the military's Inspector General (IG) said the operation conducted by the Army's regional forces and the CIA-trained Light Reaction Co. in Barangay Ipil in Mahalmong was legitimate.

"[The] ensuing gunbattle was a legitimate encounter between the enemies of the state and the government troops," the IG said.

Jolo Bishop Angelito Lampon said the findings had acquitted the soldiers involved in the massacre.

"The reports coming out were inaccurate," Allaga said, stressing they never cleared the soldiers.

The report triggered outrage among officials and human rights groups.

A Moro human rights group based in Cotabato City even said it was submitting the issue before the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC).

Tan said the big number of civilian casualties during the raid was unacceptable.

But Allaga said the soldiers took so much care during the conduct of the operation against the Abu Sayyaf in the area.

"The military operation was selective and deliberate and our troops were highly trained and properly equipped. There could have been more civilian casualties had [the] troops failed to follow the rules of engagement during the operation," he said.

Allaga also said two of the supposed civilians killed were actually Abu Sayyaf members, Abu Sayyaf and Abu Dyangit. Sayyaf was Ipil village councilor Sidiarul Jahim.

Gelacio Dimanipis of the Tulong Lupah Brgy said he had received reports that the military was trying to bribe the families of some of the victims to corroborate its claim about the encounter. —Julie Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

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DENR stops LGUs from issuing small mining permits

PUERTO PRINCESA—ENVIRONMENT Secretary Lito Atienza has signed an order that effectively stops local governments from issuing small-scale mining permits for nickel and similar ore mining ventures.

The order, which has yet to be published before it takes into effect, has been endorsed by the Philippine Chamber of Mines, according to Rolinel de Jesus, Mines and Geosciences Bureau director.

"The secretary knows he is on the right track on this DAO (Department Administrative Order) and he is being supported by the Chamber of Mines," De Jesus told the Inquirer.

This developed as the DENR rescinded the large-scale mining application of three local companies controlled by a Canadian mining company.

On Feb. 7, an MGB panel of arbiters rejected a ruling it made on Dec. 14, 2007 denying the applications for a large-scale mining permit of the local companies that are subsidiaries of the Canadian group MBMI Resources based in Vancouver, British Columbia.

The MGB ruled that MBMI, which is a foreign company not registered in the Philippines, is "disqualified" from applying for a large-scale permit under Republic Act 7942 or the Philippine Mining Code.

"It is clear that the Canadian stockholders are the ones in control of the (local) corporations, solely on the strength of their far more substantial financial investment in relation to that of the Filipino stockholders," it said.

The Defense government had earlier granted small-scale mining permits to Rikkels Louise Mining and Development Corp., Nano Nickel Mining Corp. and Mc Arthur Mining Corp.

The companies have been trying to convert their existing small-scale operations into a Financial or Technical Assistance Agreement (FTAA) application.

The MGB, however, described Mr. MB's participation in the FTAA application as "in case of misrepresentation."

"The participation of MBMI only proves that it is the Canadian company (MBMI) that will provide the finances and the resources to operate the mining areas for the benefit and interest of the same and not the Filipino stockholders who only have a less substantial financial stake in the corporations," it added.

The MGB panel also blasted at the MBMI consortium's negotiations against it of "gross incompetence" and "that the resolution was issued for consideration."

An official of one of the mining companies contacted by the Inquirer disclosed the MGB ruling as part of a ploy of a (3rd) company to take over their mining claims.

Lawyer Wenner Dickson of Toledo Mining and Development Corp. claimed that a rival company, Berkshire Consolidated Mines Corp., was behind the moves to cancel their claims over the nickel-rich properties in southern Dalawan. "They are claim jumpers and they are dreaming," Dickson told the Inquirer.

MBMI, a publicly listed company in the TSX Exchange in Canada, claimed in its disclosure statements that it controls over 22,000 hectares of mined lands in Palawan and Davao.

David Tavenner, president of Redmond, has complained to the National Commission for Indigenous Peoples that MBMI had continued with its consultation activities, as part of its MPSA application process, with the indigenous communities despite the DENR ruling.

Redemption Arsis, Inquirer Southern Luzon

FAMILY CONCERN
Another Baru hero child visualized during her anti-rebirth rally in Rights City on Friday. KOKY CONCEPCION/INQUIRER.NET

Firm to sue Atienza over $4-M nickel

STA. CRUZ, ZAMBALES—ENVIRONMENT Secretary Lito Atienza on Friday ordered officials of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau in Central Luzon to confiscate $4 million worth of nickel allegedly illegally mined by a mining firm here.

Johnn Lazaro, project manager of A3 Unc Corp., told the Inquirer on Saturday that his company would sue Atienza if the DENR proceeded with the confiscation order.

MGB regional director Antonio Aborgan has not yet set a date to confiscate the nickel.

The MGB on Feb. 8 seized the stocks and required A3 UMA to submit ore transport permits, mining permits, operating agreements and other documents to prove that the ore were legally sourced.

Aborgan and Zambales Rep. Antonio Diaz inspected the firm's export here on Friday.

Lazaro said he tried to dissuade Atienza by showing "complete documents" on the sources of the 150,000 metric tons of nickel. The DENR ordered the volume to be about 200,000 DT that are bound for China.

According to Lazaro, the ore came from 60 mining claims, spanning five hectares each, in Bo. Alusiis of Candelaria, Lemery and Santa Cruz, and not from any sites claimed by other mining firms.

In a statement, Atienza said he ordered the confiscation because A3 UMA "failed to produce appropriate documents" for its trucks that are awaiting shipment in the company's pier in Barangay Bolito here.

A3 UMA and the Zambales Chromite Mining Co. Inc. (ZCMC), which is partly owned by ISMCI Mining Corp. through the Hi-Arm Holdings, are linked in a court battle over the control of a chromite area for their respective pools.

Army services

A memorandum of agreement dated last DECEMBER employed the services of an Army officer, six soldiers and 75 paramilitary personnel to guard its site against supposed attack plots by New People's Army rebels. Some paramilitary troops, however, were used to harass A3 UMA workers at its port, police reports disclosed.

In his statement, Atienza made no reference to the port war that has been pending in court.

"A3 UMA is a holder of a small-scale mining permit and, as such, is only allowed to extract not more than 50,000 MT of nickel ore annually. But considering its stockpile of 200,000 MT and another 47,000 MT shipped out last month, the firm is highly believed to have engaged in over-extraction and violated the law," Atienza said in the statement.

Referring to the ore he saw at the company's port ,he said: "It is very evident that heavy equipment and trucks were used. It is clear that A3 UMA violated the conditions of its mining permit."

"This, for sure, was an 'example of abuse' by small-scale mining permit holders.

"This is not at the right time for us to create some of our laws and by that alone we can say that these mineral products stockpiled here today are deemed illegal," Atienza told reporters here.

He said small-scale mining is supposed to be for "subsistence type of operation" and not the kind that uses sophisticated heavy equipment.

Lazaro said A3 UMA has complied with the provisions of the law and paid P17 million to the provincial government since July 2007.

Zambales Gov. Amor Deloso confirmed the ban pursued by his colleagues here.

"So far it is the only mining firm in the province that pays on time," Deloso said.

Atienza said the four mining companies had complained that A3 UMA had mined in their areas without their consent, alerting that by using small-scale mining permit. These are issued by the local governments.

He identified the complainants as ZCMC, Emerald Minerals Inc., Benguet Corp. and Philnico Mining Corp. (PMC).

According to Atienza, ZCMC, Emerald and Benguet Corp. have "valid and existing" mineral production sharing agreements (MPSAs) issued by the DENR. PMC, he said, has "prior right" over the area through a pending MPSA application at the DENR. —Grace Villa and Fredie Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon

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A MASS dedicated to the search for truth in the NBN controversy is held at the Santuario de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe Church at UST. —GRACIA

'Fight may take longer'

From page A1

example wants leaders without the help of key political figures like himself.

Speaking on UST, Aquino said in Filipino: "I don't want to discourage you but if anyone's it may take a longer time because we have not awakened those countrymen of ours who seem to be fighting sleep.

"Still I am not losing hope. If we were able to restore education, maybe it would be easier for us now because there's no essential issue and I hope we will not have martial law."

Mr Arroyo's chief legal counsel, Sergio Apostol, said the President was confident her opponents would not drum enough people to the streets to oust her.

Wearing a bright yellow sash—her signature color and also the color of UST—Aquino received a standing ovation before she spoke.

She asked for patience and stressed that she would not abandon Lozada, who had linked Mr Arroyo and her husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, to the scandal-tainted NBN deal.

"Sus, just a little more sacrifice, just a little more hardship," said Aquino, who came to power in 1986 after a popular uprising toppled the dictator Marcos.

"If not for you, Am, only a few would know about what is really happening in our government," she added.

Geopolitical concerns

In his speech, Lozada said a priest "close to the cardinals" had told him that he would have had "no problems" had Jaime Cardinal Sin—a towering figure in the 1986 EDSA People Power revolution—been alive today.

"He told me (that) the cardinals and bishops are very mindful of political actions because some (have) economic and also geopolitical considerations. Pilar, you have to reach me to cardinals, all the bombilas, all the liturgical sharing, all those dioramas that you had (taught) me before, because I have to renounce my faith if that is how you will answer me."

What UST means

Lozada came to the church wearing a black T-shirt with the words: "We are UST (United in Search for the Truth)."

A 1986 UST engineering graduate, Lozada was welcomed back "home" with an ovation in the basilicum from the Church before he spoke to the 1,000 people who had spilled outside the church.

The Mass was led by UST rector, Fr Rolando de la Rosa OP.

Among those who attended were Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim, Association of Marian Religious Superiors of the Philippines chair Sr. Mary John Mananzan, De La Salle University president Br. Bernie Lattore FSC, Adamson University president Fr. Gino Ba-ggao, former Cabinet secretaries Dinky Soliman and Florencio Abad, and former Speaker Jose de Venecia's wife, Gina.

Estrada's supporters

Estrada defended his presence on the stage at the Feb. 29 pro-Erap rally in Makati, which was organized by some ex-partymates.

"(But Aquino) has her own following because she is the symbol of democracy. Being a former president, too, I still also have my own following and I can draw more people than Leah Navarro and Boy Sayson," he said in a phone interview with the Inquirer.

Estrada was referring to the leaders of the Black and White Movement and the Council of Philippine Affairs, respectively.

"I am very sure that without the religious sector which has a command crowd and without the help of [political personalities], they cannot draw their own assembly," said Estrada, whose chances among the masses catapulted him to the presidency.

Ramos urges caution

Ramos, who stood as one of the godfathers at the wedding of retired Philippine National Police Director General Arturo Lomibao and Jacky Tia at the Manila Cathedral on Sunday, said the Makati rally was a beginning.

But Ramos added: "You must not jump to any conclusion just because it was seemingly well attended. There was a lot of energy but if you're looking at previous people power events that were successful, resulting to regime change, I think we are just beginning."

Ramos was referring to the Edsa I and II revolts that resulted in the ouster of Marcos in 1986 and of Estrada in 2001.

"We are still [not] there. We still have a long way to go. I hope you listen to the homily. It's all about the truth," he said, according to the ABS-CBN account.

Mr Arroyo was also a sponsor at the wedding but left after the ceremonies.

Fr. De la Rosa gave a different view of people power in his homily at UST.

"We delude ourselves if we think that by removing the President here, Malacañang, just as we did with Marcos and Erap, integrity and honesty will be restored," he said.

He also said, "We must stop looking for scapegoats or raise our border, our guilt. We seem to have a penchant for putting the blame on just one person or a group of persons in order to take the heat off ourselves."

De la Rosa said it was a "dangerous misunderstanding" to single out moral bankruptcy in the government while not looking at one's own.

An official of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines said Lozada should not doubt the bishops' support for him.

"The bishops in general, more perhaps (in some), support Lozada," Caloocan City Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez, CBCP public affairs chair, said on the phone.

He added: "In fact, Lozada was one of the influences why the CBCP's statement (on the NBN issue) has become firmer."

Iñiguez said there were various ways the bishops would show their support for Lozada, including visiting and comforting him.

"Maybe he is just expecting other means of encouragement, that's why he is disappointed," Iñiguez said. **With a report from Margaux C. Ortiz**

Realtors finally bag all-Filipino crown

night that put an end to a classic Inter-PBA Philippine Cup championship series.

The 6-foot-5 Sta. Lucia dapper hit four crucial baskets in a rolling 13-2 run inside the final 5:46 as the Realtors turned a 79-80 deficit into a 92-82 lead with 1:49 left to close out the fantastic series before a capacity crowd packed at the Araneta Coliseum.

"I told my teammates (before the game) that there is no tomorrow for us after this," Espino, who has been given credit by management and coaching staff for bold step for team together on and off the court, said in Filipino.

"I asked them to give it their all tonight."

Finals MVP

Espino finished with 20 points and won adjudged Finals Most Valuable Player for the first time in his career leading the Realtors to only their second championship in 19 years.

This one, though, was undoubtedly the sweetest one considering the circumstances surrounding these playoffs.

Joseph Yeo kicked off the Realtors' final run, supplanging post a phenom of defenders to nail clutch hooked jumps for an 81-80 lead before Espino scored three of his team-best unanswered like Lucia bedlam that signaled the start of the end for the Tender Asiry Giants.

The 24-year-old Espino's heroics started in the second half, where he hit 12 in the third before topping it with 10 in the payoff period. He also had five rebounds and a block in 38 minutes.

Kelly Williams scored 17 points in a splendid support job, while rookie point guard Ryan Reyes contributed 12 and Sedfrey Gonzales and Rhalfen Ibanez added 11 each.

The Realtors coach was also the first for coach Bayer Fernandez —either as a player or a coach— in 12 years in the league and he gave it to the team where he started and ended his playing career during back to back championships.

Peter Jane Simon led Purefoods with 27 points, and Jensen Hayford (1) but was unable to carry the Giants on his shoulders when he needed to in the fourth period.

The Realtors played with an much reluctant, rebounding just four turnovers to the rookie match to equal the franchise-best mark in a Finals game in league history.

"Credit goes to my players for working so hard for this championship," Fernandez said. "I also give credit to Purefoods, they also did a good job."

The crowd of 15,147 paying fans was the league's biggest since the 16,287 which saw Ginebra of the Philippine Cup Finals between eventual champion Barangay Ginebra versus Talk 'N Text in 2005.

Ever since the new scoring at the Big Dome was implemented late in the last decade, the new attendance record for the league stands at 16,777. It was set during the regular semifinal double-header of this same tournament last season.

The weekday attendance, including many spectators to the Philippines Basketball Association, who also frequented several UAAP games last year including the classic Ateneo-La Salle duels.

Import-hunting

Meanwhile, the hunt for reinforcements for the Fiesta Cup is on, and it is curious to note that Alaska still doesn't have one to bounce to the defense.

"We've heard and lost about three guys already," coach Tim Cone told the business over the phone.

"It's either they are signed or they want more money." Cone explained in two of those prospects wanted something like $50,000 a month in June pay after original choice, Jeff Garcia became unavailable because of injury.

The maximum salary for imports is $20,000 a month and this is exclusive of 15,000 a month for food expenses. PBA 2000 is a month for accommodation and is out of

SA POLITICAL CRISIS NGAYON SNAP ELECTION ANG SAGOT:
legal, mapayapa at tamang pamamaraan!

SNAP ELECTION- sang-ayon sa ating Konstitusyon!
SNAP ELECTION- batay sa Batas Pambansa 883 na pinagbasihan ng February 7, 1986 Snap Elections (Marcos vs Cory)!
SNAP ELECTION- ang pamamayani ng balota at kalwiran HINDI ng karahasan o bardi, rebolusyon o kudeta at martial law!
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HOUSE BILL NO. 3589

Introduced by Honorable Eduardo Nonato N. Joson

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The truth hounds. The truth haunts and the truth hurts. This is the primary objective of this proposal: to prevent danger and harm to our people precisely because in the search for the truth and justice, someone will get hurt in the process and it will be ironic and a tragedy if our people will be the victims of such search for truth and justice.

In the context of our history, snap election was held in 1986 to find out whether Pres. Marcos at the time still enjoyed the trust and confidence of the people. A new mandate was necessary at the time to pre-empt growing opposition to his rule and the consensus at the time was that he could still win if elections were held then. The allegations of misgovernance were the same then and now: corruption or cronyism, human rights violations and undemocratic space for media and other constitutional freedoms. The issue of legitimacy was also a primordial issue not because of the electoral process but because of its removal thru the declaration of martial law. The people's sovereign authority to freely choose their leaders untainted by fraud and violence in both cases, then and now had been unduly compromised and subverted.

This proposed bill seeks to bring the power of the people back to their bosoms. By holding snap elections as we done in 1986, will among others, bring closure to the many accusations being hurled against the administration. It will also promote political accountability and stability thru the electoral process and thus prevent opportunists and anarchists to bring our country not only to its knees but to the graveyard of perfidy and tragedy.

Approval of this bill is earnestly requested.

HOUSE BILL NO. 3589

Introduced by Honorable Eduardo Nonato N. Joson

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE HOLDING OF ELECTION FOR PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES ON THE 4TH MONDAY OF MAY 2008, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Presidential Election/Term of Office- A national election for President of the Republic of the Philippines shall be held on the 4th Monday of May 2008. The duly elected President shall assume office at noon of June 30, 2008 and he shall serve until his terms expires on June 30, 2010. Said President shall not be eligible for reelection.

SECTION 2. Political Question Clause- This act by both Houses of the Congress of the Republic of the Philippines shall be considered a political question based on historical precedent which could ultimately be decided only by the members of the Congress of the Republic of the Philippines as the duly elected Representatives of the people in the first instance and by the people themselves as the repository of sovereign authority.

SECTION 3. Appropriation Clause- The amount of Two Billion (P2,000,000,000.00) pesos is hereby appropriated to implement this act. Said account shall be taken from the 2008 General Appropriations Act or from savings of the different departments under the 2007 budget.

SECTION 4. Implementing Rules and Regulations – The Commission on Election (COMELEC) shall promulgate the rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act within thirty (30) days from approval hereof.

SECTION 5. Separability Clause – If any part, section or provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 6. Effectivity - This act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.

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4th PELAC Annual Awards Night

Congratulations to the outstanding achievers from BDO who clinched 2007's prestigious awards!

Region of the Year Award

Branch of the Year Award

Chairman's Award

Elite Circle Award

PHILAM EQUITABLE LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY (PELAC)

PELAC

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4th PELAC Annual Awards Night

March 3, 2008 6:00pm, Rockwell Drive, Rockwell Tent, Makati City

Congratulations to the outstanding achievers from PELAC Sales Force who clinched 2007's prestigious awards!

AIG EuroGrace Award

PELAC Division Manager of the Year

Chairman's Award

AREA MANAGERS — Diamond, Gold, Silver

FINANCIAL SALES EXECUTIVES — Diamond, Gold, Silver

Rookie of the Year Award

AREA MANAGER

FINANCIAL SALES EXECUTIVE

AXN Producer Award

DIVISION MANAGERS

AREA MANAGERS

FINANCIAL SALES EXECUTIVES

Valuable Contributor's Award

Highest FYP per Division

Highest Case Count per Division

President's Award

PHILAM EQUITABLE LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY (PELAC)

Late SPORTS

More Sports on A29 to A32

Realtors finally bag all-Filipino crown

By Manny Castillo

DENNIS ESPINO PROVIDED HIMSELF A SPECIAL moment to look back to in his career: An all-Filipino title for the team he has stayed loyal to for 13 years.

Labeled as one of the league's biggest underachievers in the past, Espino hit all the crucial shots for the Realtors down the stretch in a 100-98 Game 7 victory over Purefoods last

REPORT: A32

Aplus METRO
Editor Boots G. Dipasupil

MMDA offers amnesty to PUV drivers

Last call for those with unsettled traffic fines dating back to '95

By Ed Tiu

DRIVERS OF PASSENGER JEEPNEYS, BUSES and taxis with unsettled traffic fines dating back to the mid-'90s have until the last week of March to apply for amnesty, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority said yesterday.

In a scheme that could lead to the lifting of thousands of years in fines imposed on violators, the agency is offering amnesty to drivers of all passenger vehicles, except provincial buses, with accumulated traffic violation receipts from 1995 to Feb. 15 this year.

"This is good news for some drivers who have accumulated fines amounting to P20,000," said MMDA General Manager Robert Nazareno.

Conditional amnesty

The amnesty, however, does not apply to administrative offenses like driving without a license, operating a "colorum" (unlicensed) those without a franchise and violations of the truck ban, Nazareno added.

It only covers moving violations such as disregarding traffic signs, illegal counterflow and reckless driving, he said.

Those who want to avail of the amnesty must apply at the MMDA office in Guadalupe, Makati City or on Indian Road 20.

They must pay the amount equivalent to the lowest fine imposed on them but without the additional penalty for late payment.

Then will also be required to undergo a seminar on traffic rules and policies, Nazareno said.

Computerized system

MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando said the drivers would do well to avail themselves of the amnesty, considering the agency's system of identifying vehicles with unsettled traffic tickets.

Values we began using computers, we now have an effective system in which all those caught by our traffic enforcers with unpaid tickets can be identified with just one text message," Fernando said.

At the same time, he pointed out that the amnesty should not be a reason for drivers to take traffic rules for granted.

Habitual traffic violators face the risk of having their driver's licenses suspended, he warned.

Arson eyed in 11-hour QC fire; 3 persons hurt

By Marlon Ramos

ARSON INVESTIGATORS ARE LOOKING into the possibility that an 11-hour fire which left three persons wounded and destroyed two warehouses and residential houses in New Manila, Quezon City, was deliberately set off.

The incident happened on March 1, the first day of Fire Prevention Month.

"This could be an arson case and not just an accidental fire incident," Insp. Ariel Bautista, deputy chief of the Quezon City Fire Department, told the bureau.

He refused, however, to give further details of their ongoing investigation.

Bautista identified those wounded in the fire as PO2 Angelino Ong, a fireman assigned at the La Loma fire station; Garry Villapando, a volunteer fireman from the Tandang Fire Brigade and Solito Ga, the owner of one of the houses which burned down.

Dagdagan suffered cuts in the forehead while Villapando injured his hands.

Bautista estimated the damage to property at about P5.8 million.

He said the fire broke out at 7:32 p.m. yesterday within a compound owned by Jocelina Carballo at 7 Unity Cir. Dulmenino St., Barangay Mariana.

Bautista narrated earlier reports which said the fire started inside a textile factory in the compound.

"The flames actually came from a wooden house owned by Mrs. Carballo. It was located beside her two-story house. She told us that there were several cylinders of gasoline inside the wooden house," he said.

Bautista added that the fire quickly spread to Carballo's house and another warehouse containing plastic ribbons, also within the compound.

Witnesses heard a difficult as you see the fire as the textile and plastic ribbons, both highly flammable items, were piled up underneath the burning roof which gave way.

It took about five hours before they were able to declare the fire under control, Bautista said.

He added that it was already 6:44 a.m. yesterday when they finally put out the fire with the help of 15 firetrucks and 12 fire trucks from the QCFD and volunteer fire brigades.

DID YOU KNOW

ARSON, the country's regions, Metro Manila had the second highest number of deaths in 2000 (about 16,000). Of this number, 34,000 were male and 24,000 were female. Southern Tagalog had the highest mortality with 64,000 deaths, while the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao had the lowest (2,000). There were nearly 400,000 deaths in the Philippines in 2000.

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Malate streets used as bus parking lot

MAYOR LIM, why are buses found for hire/are allowed to park at L.M. Guerrero and Remedios Streets in Malate? These cause severe traffic. Most are guides and pollute the air by keeping their engines running while the drivers and conductors take a break.

ELSIE DELMORA, 38, Malate, Manila

Guadalupe sidewalks full of vendors

VENDORS occupying the sidewalks at Guadalupe in Makati near the jobless notice at the public market area are growing in number! They operate even there during the day but after 6 p.m., they spread like mushrooms. Pedestrians are forced to walk in the streets because the sidewalks are full of items for sale.

ANGELO ASUNCION, 33, Makati

No light bills for these illegal hawkers

ILLEGAL vendors have been making use of rent-a-wires hooked with soft drinks that are obviously plugged into illegal connections. The tricycles, which also obstruct the flow of pedestrian traffic, can be found near the Greenwoods pizza parlor at the corner of S. Diego Street. I have complained about the illegal connections to the Manila Electric Co. several times, but they don't seem to mind the issues. Do they pass Emerald to us, poor consumers?

ADOLF LORENZO, 37, Quiapo

Escort vehicles above the law?

I WAS a witness to a very disturbing sight to vividly on Commonwealth Avenue as I was driving towards the Quezon Memorial Circle. A cream-colored Benz with plate number UIL-[illegible] was trying to cut into my lane, prompting me to step on the brakes and blow my horn. Drawings unfriendly signs from the Benz passengers. By the Benz came another car, a speeding black Expedition almost hit them. The thing that shocked me was when I saw a passenger of the Benz in the back seat pointing his de facto/handcuffings at the Expedition! Are these escort people above the law?

AIM C. M. Quezon City

C3 Road turned into parking area

BUSINESS establishments on C3 Road near Road Avenue have turned the thoroughfare into their parking area. Cars are double parked on both sides of the road, including vehicles that are no longer in running condition. It's too dangerous for motorists.

ISIDRO CUA UR, 34, Caloocan City

Birds find nesting place in Valenzuela City

By Nancy C. Carvajal

A TWO-HECTARE LOT WHERE more than 100 species of migratory birds have started laying their (migratory) home will soon become one of Valenzuela City's main tourist attractions.

The city government earlier declared a swampy area in Villa Encarnacion, Malanday, which is surrounded by trees and teeming with water lilies, a bird sanctuary.

Residents said the birds, which are from Indonesia, according to experts, have been flocking to the area for more than five years, prompting Mayor Sherwin Gatchalian to sign a memorandum of agreement with the owners of the property for its development into an ecopark.

"The landscape in the area will not be touched but it will be developed into a bird and wildlife sanctuary," Gatchalian said.

No one knows exactly when and how many kinds of species showed in the two-hectare property.

The city government said it would coordinate with ornithologists and experts from the Wild Bird Club of the Philippines to identify and catalogue its feathered visitors.

One of the species that has been spotted in the area, however, is the "balete-pitik" or black-crowned night heron.

Gatchalian said wooden viewing decks will be built around the area for the convenience of bird watchers.

"The decks will surround the swamp to give people a good vantage point without disturbing the birds," the mayor added.

Best of all, the ecopark, according to Gatchalian, will be open to the public free of charge.

"We want to protect the birds and at the same time provide enjoyment to residents and tourists," he said.

The sanctuary, which is not an hour's drive away from Makati City, will also be ideal for students going on field trips. "The objective is to also educate, not only to entertain," Gatchalian said.

MORE than 100 species of birds live in a two-hectare lot in Malanday.

According to residents, the birds probably flock to the area, which used to be a rice field, because they can find food there.

"We see them fly low and dive under the water lilies and stay there for a while, probably to look for food," a man observed.

We added that migratory birds abound in the area during the summer months. They are most active from 4 p.m. until sunset.

For Gatchalian, the birds came to Valenzuela City for one true reason.

"According to experts, our tropical climate is conducive to nesting, feeding and breeding," he said.

Residents who live near the swamp said that at first, the sounds made by their fine-feathered friends gave them quite a scare.

"They chirp and make a lot of noise—especially at night, which could be scary if one is not used to it," said Rita de Jesus, whose house is closest to the proposed bird sanctuary.

"When we moved in here five years ago, the birds were already here," he added, saying that some residents in the area who have lived there before them would hire that the birds started nesting one day and have been roosting back since.

Jaber said that for him the best "front seat view" of the birds of any resident in the area, referring to a tree full of nests right in front of a window on the second floor of his house.

For those planning to go bird watching, the best time to go is around 6 p.m. until sunset. Bringing their binoculars is also recommended by dozens.

As daytime, they remain in the tree or in their nests, flitting from one branch to another.

ACCORDING to residents in the area, the best time for bird-watching is from 4 p.m. until sunset.

VALENZUELA City Mayor Sherwin Gatchalian hopes the eco-park will attract both locals and foreigners to the city.

Chinese tire dealer files complaint vs compatriots

By Marlon Ramos

A CHINESE BUSINESSMAN YESterday asked the police for help in getting off the back of his countrymen who allegedly failed to pay him Php 4.8 million worth of tires.

Xiang Shang Pan, 46, also known as Carlos Francisco, went to the Quezon City Police District's Criminal Investigation and Investigation Unit office in Camp Karingal, Diliman, Quezon City to file a complaint against fellow Chinese businessmen Richard Uy and Philip Ng.

In his affidavit, Xiang said Uy and Ng were able to purchase four months ago in supply from stores with rubber tires of different types and sizes.

Tire deliveries

Xiang, manager of the New Century Grp Marketing Corp., said he ordered his men to deliver the tires to Uy's Treehouse Restaurant and Accessories shop at 1084 Dr. A. Santos Ave., Barangay San Dionisio, Parañaque City.

The victim said his men also delivered rubber tires to Ng's Rincon Tires Corp. store located at 1353 Quezon Ave., Quezon City.

Xiang said the boss pay promised to pay him a total of P4.7 million in two weeks' time and issued six checks to cover the amount.

Bank accounts closed

"When he deposited the checks in his bank account, Xiang found out that the checkers supposed bank accounts were already closed," a report from the QCPD CIDU said.

Xiang said that after he confronted the suspects, they vowed their new checks from another bank.

Bouncing checks

But just like the earlier checks given to him, the new checks likewise bounced, prompting him to seek police assistance.

PO2 Joy Mariedo, case investigator, said they subpoenaed Xiang to file a court case against the suspects for violating Batas Pambansa 22, otherwise known as Anti-Bouncing Checks Law.

MetroBriefs

Thieves break into Pasay lotto outlet, make off with P125,000

BURGLARS broke into a lottery outlet in Pasay City yesterday morning and ran off with P125,000 in cash, the police said. The unidentified suspects entered the establishment at 1:30 a.m. by breaking open the padlock of the iron accordion door, investigators said. The burglary occurred between 1 a.m. and 7:45 a.m., according to a report by PO2 Jonathan Morales of the criminal investigation division. Based on the complaint, the lottery franchise owner, Ruth Mendiola, 48, of Villasol Street, reported the incident to the Pasay police at 8:45 a.m. A few minutes after he discovered the burglary. Some of the other operations personnel then went to look for clues in the robbers' identity.

BJ Pat

Man kills self, says he's tired of living in suicide note

A 32-YEAR-OLD man committed suicide by hanging himself inside his house in Pandacan, Manila, on Saturday morning. The body of Ernilito Peñal, a hairdresser of a beauty salon in Ermita-Malate, Manila, was discovered by his sister, Eleanor, with a electrical cord around his neck. Before the incident, the victim was reportedly suspended from work for 15 days for investigation. Initial investigation showed Peñal had left notes in his cellphone stating that he was tired of living. He took his own life on May 10, 2008, Saturday. His body was found seven hours later, along with a suicide note that said no one was involved in his death. According to the doctors, he was "tired of living."

Aileen M. Lopez

METRO
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INQUIRER

Alleged illegal recruiter nabbed in front of QC mall

By Marlon Ramos

POLICE ARRESTED A WOMAN in Fairview, Quezon City, on Saturday afternoon for allegedly collecting almost P500,000 in fees from several persons whom she had promised jobs as in the United States.

Dorothy Lolly Cores, 41, of 6218 Palanan Street, Area A, Cubao, Quezon City was detained in the Quezon City Police District jail in Camp Karingal, Diliman, Quezon City.

A report from the QCPD Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit said Cores recruited several persons from the cities of Caloocan and Novaliches, last year to work as caregiver in her aunt's clinic in Manhattan, New York.

Her victims said that after they paid her P467,500 in recruitment fees, Cores suddenly disappeared.

At around 3 p.m. Saturday, one of the victims saw the suspect waiting for a ride home in front of a shopping mall in Fairview like wanted criminals were in a usually police station and had the suspect arrested.

Taytay building new, bigger landfills

By Kristine L. Alave

THE TOWN OF TAYTAY, RIZAL, is building bigger landfills to replace its old dump and to accommodate more garbage from the town which is considered as one of the growth areas outside Metro Manila.

In a statement yesterday, Taytay Mayor Joey Gacula announced that the town government has started to build two landfills to replace the Barangay San Juan dump.

Gacula said the municipality has identified two parcels of land in the hilly villages of Muzon and Dolores.

He added that a working group committee is overseeing the preparations for the dumps.

Both areas, he assured residents, are well outside the proximities of residential communities.

Gacula said the municipality has also started to implement a solid waste management program to reduce the volume of garbage that will be dumped in the landfills.

The mayor said the new landfills should provide more revenues to the municipality which sees a surge in the number of commercial establishments.

The locality is currently operating a 1.5-hectare controlled dump in Barangay San Juan.

Pakistan charges militant leader with Bhutto slay

ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN—PAKISTANI police on Saturday belatedly accused the top Taliban leader in the country of a host of other crimes in planning the assassination of opposition leader Benazir Bhutto.

Police filed preliminary charges in court against Baitullah Mehsud, who had been named by the Pakistani government in the Dec. 27 killing of Bhutto in a suicide and gun attack during a public rally. Mehsud, alleged to have al-Qaida connections, is underground and is now not close to the police were close to catching him.

A judge has issued non-bailable warrants of arrest against Mehsud and four others, said Chaudhry Abdul Majeed, the chief investigator in the case.

Mehsud was named by Pervaiz Musharraf within days of the assassination, but the filing of the preliminary charges Saturday complicates a legal formality. It is the first legal step before an arrest can be made.

A Pakistani court, meanwhile, acquitted the brothers of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in a murder case where the families of the dead suddenly switched their accusations, lawyers said.

The turnaround comes after the second-place showing by Sharif's party in the Feb. 10 parliamentary elections. The party is expected to form a ruling coalition with Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party.

Mehsud, the suspect in Bhutto's assassination, is the commander of Tehrik-e Taliban, an umbrella group of Islamic militant groups linked to al-Qaida. He is believed to be based in the volatile South Waziristan province near the border with Afghanistan, and has been blamed for a series of suicide attacks across Pakistan.

Majeed refused to give details of the investigation into the specific roles that the suspects are accused of playing in the assassination.

He said the others named in the charges are Baitat Rehman, Imranullah, Faiz Muhammad and Abdullah. All five are accused of being involved in planning and financing the assassination plot, he said. Imranullah and Abdullah are only one named.

Police have already arrested five suspects in connection with Bhutto's killing, including Hasnain Gul, who allegedly fatally injured Bhutto's attacker because he wanted to avenge the death of a friend in a military attack on a mosque last year.

Bhutto's party was the biggest winner in last month's election, followed by the group led by Nawaz Sharif. Leaders of the two parties hope to form a coalition that would give them the two-thirds majority needed to impeach Musharraf or curtail his powers through constitutional amendments.

Musharraf has faced calls to resign from his Muslim League-Q party and reportedly delivered to the role. He has refused to step down.

Musharraf came to power in a 1999 coup that ousted Sharif. Although Pakistan's partially welcomed Musharraf, he has become increasingly unpopular amid accusations he has concentrated on democracy and the judiciary. AP

Australia's drought easing but not yet over

SYDNEY—AUSTRALIA'S WORST DROUGHT in a century is finally showing signs of easing, giving devastated farmers reason for hope as the southern hemisphere autumn begins, forecasters said.

The National Climate Center (NCC) said Australia enjoyed its wettest summer in about seven years, effectively ending the drought in some areas, although many more remain parched by the phenomenon known locally as "The Big Dry."

"The outlook is reasonably promising, it's one of the more encouraging outlooks we've seen for a while," NCC climatologist Blair Trewin said.

He said Australia had experienced two droughts in recent years, a short-term one affecting much of the country's south-east which began in 2000 and a longer-term one that has impacted on some areas for up to a decade.

Trewin said the worst hit areas over the long term were south-east Queensland state, southern Victoria and south west Western Australia, as well as the Murray-Darling river basin, the country's agricultural heartland.

He said the El Niño weather pattern associated with the drought was over and forecasters were hopeful it would be followed by a La Niña, which usually brings high rainfall.

Australia's federal government has estimated more than three billion dollars ($2.64 billion) in drought relief since 2001.

Official figures released last month showed drought cost 10 percent off the value of Australian agricultural production in 2002-03, taking total output down to 34.2 billion dollars ($22.3 billion). AFP

PRIVATE MOMENT
A woman smokes a cigar during the 10th annual cigar festival in Havana, on Feb. 25. Cigar enthusiasts from around the world descended on Cuba, visiting tobacco farms and savoring pure cigar brands. AP

3RD IN 3 DAYS

Pakistan suicide attack kills 35

PESHAWAR, PAKISTAN—A SUICIDE bomber blew himself up at a gathering of tribal elders and local officials in northwest Pakistan on Sunday, killing at least 35 people, hospital and security officials said.

The attack was the third in as many days in Pakistan, and will pose an immediate challenge to the country's incoming government, set to be a coalition led by the parties of slain premier Benazir Bhutto and ex-premier Nawaz Sharif.

Hundreds of people have died across the northwest of the country in recent months in clashes between pro-Taliban militants and security forces and in a wave of suicide attacks blamed on the extremist rebels.

Sunday's blast took place in Dargham village near the tribal town of Dara Adam Khel, the scene of violent clashes between Pakistani troops and Islamic militants in January until local security official Shireen Khan.

Hundreds of elders from five tribes had convened a traditional council, known as a "jirga," to discuss "efforts to check growing Taliban activity in the area," according to local administration official Khalil Khan.

The bomber, believed to be a teenager, approached the meeting place on foot and blew himself up, the security official said, adding that the head of the appeasement minister was recovered at the scene.

Body parts were strewn across the site, Khalil Khan said.

At least 20 people were killed on the spot and more than 30 others wounded, Shireen Khan, the local security official, said.

Seven others later died of their injuries in two hospitals in Peshawar, the capital of North West Frontier Province, emergency services doctor Tariq Khan said.

Of the more than two dozen others being treated, several of them were in serious condition, the doctor said.

State television earlier put the death toll at 23.

Local residents Siraj Muhammad said that some clan leaders were among the dead, adding that the jirga had been highly publicized and local shops closed by tribal leaders for the occasion.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

Pakistani security officials say the lawless town of Dara Adam Khel had recently become a stronghold of the banned Islamic militant group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, which is said to have links to al-Qaida. AFP

What next after Sarkozy's fall from grace?

By Serena Chaslin

PARIS—THIS MONTH'S SIXTH NICOLas Sarkozy's presidency got off to a flying start. France's new offbeat minister-without-portfolio, the 49-year-old Sarkozy's ratings have become his most powerful weapon in today's politics.

After one of the brightest debuts of any French president, and poll ratings in March, the 51-year-old Sarkozy's ratings have become his most powerful weapon in today's politics.

Sarkozy's right-wing camp is now bracing for painful losses in local elections on March 9-16 which the Socialist opposition can use a referendum on his presidency, with his approval rating at a rock-bottom 32 percent.

"Sarkozy is a real challenge, one of love, a real influencer and even, for part of the electorate, a kind of allergic reaction," said Frederic Dabi of the IFOP polling institute.

"We've never seen anything like this, a head of state collapsing so fast, and becoming of reform-but because of his personality," agreed Dominique Reynie, professor at Sciences Po University.

Despite energetic attempts to seize back the initiative with field trips and policy announcements, Sarkozy has failed to reverse the trend.

Instead he committed a spectacular blunder last week by swearing at a man who refused to shake his hand at a farm show, calling him a "stupid bastard."

"There is an even more quintessentially French than the agriculture fair, and the president stood there in the midst of the French people, and lost his cool by handling someone, rather," said Reynie, who believes the archaic dit "tempera ble" harm to Sarkozy's image.

Voters who had May said hopeful hailed for Sarkozy's promise of a dynamic, youthful presidency, and bold reforms to fire up the economy and boost purchasing power, feel he does both in style and substance, pollsters say.

Fifty-six percent of voters think Sarkozy "badly experienced" for presidency, with a personal, hands-on approach to power—action seems him of causing an "effective dictatorship"—and a taste for luxury that caused him the nickname "Bling-Bling president."

The president's much-publicized divorce from his second wife Cecilia in October, his jet-setting romance and swift marriage to ex-supermodel Carla Bruni, gave voters the impression he was neglecting their needs.

With food prices soaring and consumer confidence at all-time low, the president's admission to January that the "euro coffers are empty" was the final straw for many voters, even though the government leaves its economic reforms have yet to show their effect.

"He chose to put himself on the frontline, and now it's the one taking the bullets," said Dabi.

In a further embarrassing blow, support for the leaves key style of government of Prime Minister Francois Fillon has soared as the president's own popularity collapses.

The opposition has suggested Sarkozy's presidency is coming apart at the seams—but however low he falls the French president cannot be impeached, with the next presidential and parliamentary elections not for 2012.

If however, as polls suggest, Sarkozy's Union for a Popular Movement loses major cities in the upcoming elections, he could face accusing pressure to change tack or become, in Reynie's words, a "normal" president. AFP

SARKOZY looks the rough the bars from the prison cell of former South Africa President Nelson Mandela in Cape Town on Feb. 29 during a two-day visit to the country.

Colombia says top rebel leader killed

REYES in photo taken May 1 2, 2001

BOGOTA, COLOMBIA—TROOPS KILLED A senior commander of Colombia's largest rebel army in an air-and-ground raid Saturday as the US-backed military dealt a stunning setback to the nation's 40-year guerrilla war.

Raul Reyes was the public face of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia as its spokesperson and considered a possible successor to the group's chief. Upon his death, troops across the border in neighboring Ecuador, said Defense Minister Juan Manuel Santos.

"This is the strongest blow dealt in the current war group to date," Santos told a news conference.

Santos said the military tracked Reyes' location through information from an informant. The air force then bombed a camp where Reyes was thought to be just after midnight Saturday. As the ground troops moved in, they came under attack from another camp located just over the border in Ecuador. When the military overran the camp, they found Reyes' body, he said.

Colombian neighbors Ecuador and Venezuela protested the incursion into for eign territory.

Ecuadorean President Rafael Correa said Colombian President Alvaro Uribe had informed him of the raid, but later announced that he was misled after Ecuadorean officials inspected a bombed rebel camp.

"The (Colombian) president either was grossly informed or 'massively lied' to the president of Ecuador," said Correa, who called home the ambassador to Colombia for consultations and promised a diplomatic series of protest.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, who is actively negotiating for the release of FARC-held hostages, warned that any such an incursion into Venezuela would lead to war.

"Don't think about doing that of here because it would very serious, it would be cause for war," Chavez said at a televised meeting with his Cabinet.

A total of 17 rebels and one soldier died in the operation, which involved Colombia's army, police and air force, the defense ministry said. AP

Iran president begins landmark trip to Iraq

BAGHDAD—IRAN'S PRESIDENT Mohmoud Ahmadinejad arrived on a traditional red carpet welcome in Iraq on Sunday for a two-day visit he hailed as a "historic step" in deepening brotherly relations" between the Muslim neighbors.

On the first ever visit by an Iranian president to Iraq, Ahmadinejad was greeted by his counterpart President Jalal Talabani in his Baghdad residence where both sides pledged to work closely with a government in a military band played the national anthems of both states.

Wearing his trademark suit with white shirt, Ahmadinejad then shook hands with Iraqi officials lined up to greet him, including Deputy Prime Minister Barham Saleh, Thore

Speaking to reporters in Tehran on Saturday, Ahmadinejad reiterated Iran's belief that the "insecurity, disagreement and tension" in war-ravaged Iraq were the result of a plot by the United States, Iran's arch-enemy.

"It is the American practice to present others as guilty wherever they are defeated," he said, slandering US allegations of Iranian meddling in Iraq. "It is not funny that there are 140,000 forces in Iraq across an of interference."

The US military in Iraq says that Iran supplies weapons and training for week-US insurgents, charges denied by Tehran. AFP

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Gatus

Deadliest day in Gaza: Israel kills 61

GAZA CITY—ISRAELI DEFENSE MINISTER EHUD Barak warned Sunday that Hamas would "pay the price" of its actions in the Gaza Strip where 61 Palestinians were killed the previous day.

Israeli forces resumed operations after a lull and air-lifted the Hamas-held Gaza Strip on Saturday, amid warnings that the violence had "tainted" the peace process.

The ruling Islamist group in the Gaza Strip "bears the responsibility for the worsening of the situation, it will pay the price for (any) strikes (the) resumption," Barak said on Israeli public radio.

The ministry also said the Israeli Army would press on with a land operation launched in the north of the Strip.

"The land and air operations will go on, we will continue to attack installations, stocks of weapons, and Hamas' infrastructure," he warned.

Saturday was the deadliest day since hostilities between Israel and Hamas militants ended in January 2009, with the Israeli assault on besieged Gaza, the 15-member body held closed door consultations which were followed by an open debate.

Libya, the Arab member of the 15-member council, circulated a draft resolution on behalf of Arab states that "strongly condemns the killing of innocent civilians, including children" by Israeli forces.

Also behind the council on "a deeply alarming escalation of violence in Gaza and southern Israel with a terrible civilian death toll."

Israeli warplanes early Sunday attacked the offices of Hamas chief Ismail Haniya in Gaza City, destroying the empty offices and wounding several people in neighboring buildings, witnesses said.

Two Israeli soldiers were killed on Saturday in Gaza, and another seven soldiers wounded, including one officer, the army said, as it battled to halt Palestinian rocket attacks on towns in southern Israel.

Senior Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said the Middle East peace talks financially resolved in November at a US conference had been "buried" under the rubble of the Israeli incursion.

"The negotiations are frozen under the bombs that were destroyed in Gaza," Erekat said. "The peace process has been destroyed because of the aggression and the crimes that have been committed." AFP

PRINCE Harry, during his tour in the British chinook, recounting his recent tour of duty in Afghanistan in Colleyville, southwest England, on March 1. REUTERS

I'm no hero, Prince Harry says, as Afghan return lauded

LONDON—PRINCE HARRY, PULLED OUT of a 10-week tour of duty in Afghanistan for security reasons, insists a swift return to the frontline, he said in an interview published Sunday, meaning he is a reluctant hero.

But as the 25-year-old spent his first night on British soil since mid-December, the head of the British Army dealt his ambitions an immediate blow, saying he was unlikely to return to the fray in the near future.

Harry dined in fame in the throne and a second-floor apartment in the Palace said Reuters correspondent Rebekah Wade and she declined comment not to publish his whereabouts for security reasons.

And he said he was now waiting to hear from his superiors about his future role but "am still keen to rejoin the regimental colleagues.

"As far as I am is, yeah, I would love to go back and I've already mentioned it (to my commanding officer) that I want to go out very very soon," he added.

But the Chief of the General Staff, Gen. Sir Richard Dannatt, said while Harry's ambitions and enthusiasm were understandable, he could not see that happening for at least 18 months.

"He's just had a deployment, we wouldn't expect to send any young officer to the normal course of events who has just had—(for) 10 weeks and that quite quickly—for another tour," he said.

"So, actually the immediate prospect of Prince Harry going anywhere else is somewhere off in the future. It actually is hypothetical for the next 12 to 18 months whether he would or wouldn't deploy again."

In interviews soon after his return, Harry spoke candidly of both about his work calling in air strikes patrolling and flying in insurgents to Helmand province in southern Afghanistan.

"You do what you have to do, what's necessary to save your own guys. If you need to drop a bomb, secure your wounds then you will, but then that's not the way it is," he said.

"It's not nice to drop bombs ... but to save lives that's what happens."

But he rejected the tag of "hero," amid fulsome praise for his work from British political and military leaders and the media.

"I wouldn't say I'm a hero at all. I'm no more a hero than anyone else. If you think about it there's thousands and thousands of troops out there," he said.

Two servicemen, both injured soldiers—one of whom lost an arm and a leg to a landmine—were on his plane home, he told reporters.

"Those are the heroes," he said.

He also said that during his time at an operating base just 300 meters from Taliban territory, he was never scared—a statement that "no place safer" to be than in the presence of Gurkhas. AFP

WHAT'S INSIDE
Spurs make it 8 straight victories /A31

SPORTS
Editor Teddyboy S. Melendres Assistant Editor Pancho T. J. Delfino

GUINNESS TOUR

Bustamante ends up 2nd to Chang

JOVEN BUSTAMANTE Surprise finals run jeopardizes his lofty world ranking

TAIWAN—JOVEN BUSTAMANTE TELLER HIS OPPONENTS ONE BY ONE but succumbed to the battle-that-mattered most, bowing to defending champion Chang Jung-Ling, 11-3, in the finals of the 2008 Guinness 9-Ball Tour opening leg yesterday at the Taipei Gymnasium here.

Bustamante, the world's sixth-ranked player, swept his way into the title match but was hounded by the gutsy-but-cool and seasoned medal-anthood stoner.

The Filipino won the leg as well as the opening set, but a tie break and a couple of unforced errors allowed Chang to erect a 5-3 lead.

Bustamante moved within a point twice, the last at 6-5, but the the 22-year-old Taiwanese pounced on his every mistake to pocket the next five frames and the title, worth $15,000.

Chang weathered Chinese Taipei's strength in the natural as color scheme which it completed your He won two legs plus the grand finals to foil as he expense of another Filipino, Lee Vann Corteza.

Bustamante settled for $6,000. He appended reigning junior world champion Ko Pin-yi 9-7 in advance to the finals.

"I really wanted to win, but there's too much pressure and I kind of fell into it," said the 29-year-old Bustamante.

Still, it was a remarkable run for Bustamante, who made the tournament through an invitation from the organizers. The 34th and last slot was vacated following China's refusal to send a player for political reasons.

"Being a field times in Far zones, I'm very proud of making it to the finals," said Bustamante. "I'll just have to go back, practice hard and do my best next time."

Chang bowled the second finals slot within rule over Ding Chang-shun.

Bustamante who vies for Ko tends up for the loss of Efren Reyes Manalo and Jeff de Luzon of the Tour have to flew to attend.

Ko also from 2007 World Pool champion Roberto Gomez in the finals of the Tsingtao Japan Cup last December and Dion Gordo in the side-match of the Brunswick Open last week at Thailand.

A bonus pro (innovator) in a billiards hall in Kuwait before Going recruited by tournamento Perry Mariano to his Bugis Promotions, Bustamante also made it to the semifinals of the 2007 World 8-Ball Championship. Mwe Min, Contributor

Bayless in, Cortez out as ref in Pacquiao-Marquez II

BAYLESS: 2nd time

THE WORLD'S FIGHT TOWN AFTER BOXing referee Jimmy Bayless of Las Vegas, has been named as the third man in the ring for the blockbuster Manny Pacquiao-Juan Manuel Marquez rematch on March 15 at the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino in Las Vegas, ESPN has reported.

Bayless, a recent Manila visitor, was picked by the Nevada State Athletic Commission over the equally experienced Joe Cortez.

The choice of referees had been a no-brainer on the both Pacquiao and Marquez who had vowed their opponent to Cortez the first rematch.

Marquez went on the scoreless world boxing bodies to request for another referee according to the fight website FightNews.com.

Cortez was the same man who refereed the first Pacquiao-Marquez encounter on May 2004 which ended in a controversial draw.

Ironically, Marquez—despite getting knocked down three times in the first round—was allowed by Cortez to fight on.

The Nevada commissioners also named Dundee Reid, Jerry Roth and Dick Flores as judges for the rematch, billed as "Unfinished Business."

It will be the second time that Bayless will officiate a fight involving the Filipino flooring superstar.

He was also the third man in the ring for a second-top encounter of the Pacquiao-Erik Morales trilogy in 2006, which Bat Gun, San Jose City lolly-servant via a 10th-round technical knockout.

Bayless has refereed 78 fights and judged 43 world championship encounters, in his volleyball, 11-year career.

He attended the World Boxing Council Convention held here from Nov. 11-17 last year. He also took time out to witness the OPBF title fight between Jessie Rabdut and Ronald Gavo's Lee Pyung-yoon at the Gen Andres Gym in Manila on Nov. 16.

Rabdut won by a Mikva-round TKO.

Most recent big bout

Bayless' most recent big bout was the Floyd Mayweather-Oscar De La Hoya lucrative January 19, 2007.

De La Hoya lost by split decision to the undefeated Mahd Boxing Council welterweight champion.

Other big fights handled by Bayless were Shane Mosley versus Fernando Vargas in 2006, Ray Jones-Antonio Tarver in 2004 and Bernard Hopkins against De La Hoya in 2004. Barbara L. Jaguinday, Contributor and Business Analyst

There's not a lot that can keep up with the new Ford Focus Turbo Diesel. German-engineered for precision shifting and easy handling, the Ford Focus still leads the pack when it comes to fuel efficiency. Reaching as much as 21 km/L, it also delivers 140kW of torque, giving you performance and fuel economy that leaves everything else behind.

Speed off with a 1.6L Diesel. 1.6L Elite or 2.0L Turbo Diesel. Test drive one today. For more information, visit your nearest dealership or call 889 FORD (3673).

Ford
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Real Spicy super hot, scorches field by five lengths

By Musong R. Carillo

HOT AS EVER.

Super horse Real Spicy broke free as the tin-tots and thumped a classy field in rolling the Philracom Commissioner's Cup by five lengths over Singalot Manchester yesterday at the Santa Ana Park in Manila.

"The victory was the third in a row to make sure for Real Spicy.

Ridden splendidly by the Pambansa Jeff Zarate, the six-year-old son of Red Quiet out of Spicy Tale was in a class by himself, taking the lead in step with two quarters left for the easy win that announced his return as the yardstick among all comers.

Sent off as the first pick in a seven-horse field that included reigning Presidential Cup champion Harlem Land, Real Spicy walked the leaders in the middle of the pack before making his sweeping move.

The 2000 Horse of the Year darted out with easy an effort, yielding off Rumble Boy and Ely Magic before pulling away from the chasing corps to clock one minute and 22.6 seconds, broken down in 14, 22, 25, 25, 26 over 1,600 meters.

That was just six-tenths of a second slower than the record he co-owns with improved charger Wild Orchid, and owners Hermie Esguerra is reaping the fruits of a major change he implemented at the start of the year.

Real Spicy is now being trained by Soaco Mandaing, a move criticized by many at the start but one which seemed to be destined at this time.

"Definitely he is more motivated than in 2006," Esguerra told the turnouts. "That year, he was dominant because he had fourth on his side. Now he has evolved into an even more dangerous campaigner because he has become versatile."

Manhattan, the tiny former Triple Crowns prospect who was ridden by Antonio Alcasid, nipped Rumble Boy and Hal Dilemo for second spot.

Harlem Land, who handled Real Spicy in the Gold Cup last year, was fourth under Jessie B. Guce.

PhilCycling heeds PSC decision to hold fund

THE PHILIPPINE CYCLING FEDERATION respects the decision of the Philippine Sports Commission suspending all financial assistance to the association pending the completion of investigation on alleged irregularities in the procurement of bicycle equipment.

PhilCycling president Bert Lina said it is only impossible for the PSC, the government sports agency, to decide on the suspension because public funds were used in the purchase of the equipment which were used in last year's 24th Southeast Asian Games in Thailand.

At least sixteen cyclists earlier sought an injunction but the alleged irregularities that also erupted on the standing style of their head coach, Jozsef Lorincsar.

The cyclists aired their grievances over the media before filing their complaint with the Ombudsman.

Lina said the suspension of financial assistance has forced PhilCycling to cancel the country's participation in the Pelgrims Tour de Jihan to on March 23, the Asian Cycling Championships in April in Nara, Japan, and the Asian Mountain Bike Championships in Nepal later this year.

The Indonesian Cycling Federation had earlier invited Victor Espinida, Genil Reyneros, Ronald Gonzales, Princes Dorcadilla and Rich Ildefonzo to compete in the one-day event.

Espinida and company won the overall team title of the six-stage Tour of Thailand last December, beating 17 other Asian and European teams. That was the first time an RP road team won a multistage race overseas.

The disgruntled cyclists include Thailand SEA Games gold medalists Baby Marites Bitao and Gina Gonzales and the Philippine Army frenzick Ildefonso and silver medalist Daniela Quinones of the Navy.

Cobras stun UV Lancers, bag nat'l students crown

HABIT! Yuo Lancer (left) of the University of Visayas reaches out for the loose ball against Ehud Pelgrosa of Southwestern University. AFP/CESAR RAMIREZ, File

CEBU CITY—SOUTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY Cobras' seasoned forward University of the Visayas, 87-82, to bag the collegiate crown of the 2008 National Students Basketball Championship (NSBC) late Saturday at the Cebu Coliseum.

It was the Cobras' second NSBC title since 1996, also at the expense of the Green Lancers.

The Cobras were in control all throughout the match, building double-digit leads in the third quarter before sending the Lancers' desperate rally to the sidelines.

The Victors nailed a big score in the fourth when Eric Zamora hooked one with 4:02 left and Ehud Pelgrosa followed suit after a bad bill at the 3:43 mark.

With the two key Cobras out, the Green Lancers staged a comeback as one straight triples by Von Harry Lanoso and a layup by Harlon Alfaro allowed UV to within a point, 83-81, 22.9 seconds left.

Axcel Bunga eased the pressure off the Cobras when he nailed two free throws, restoring an 85-81 UWU lead, 18.4 ticks remaining.

UV's chance of turning the game around vanished into thin air when Lanoso missed a game-tying triple with 6.3 seconds left.

Richard Glorebard pegged the final tally with a pair of free throws as UWU supporters erupted in frenzied celebration.

"We just concentrated on defense," said UWU coach Dodie Mogar. "UV is a tough team and I told my players to always play hard on defense. Of course, we did well in offense and that also helped us big time."

University of San Carlos clobbered University of Luzon, 115-105, to salvage third place.

In the high school finals, Benedictine International School beat Pilgrim Christian College, 83-79, while the UV Baby Lancers topped University of Pangasinan, 113-108, for third.

SWU's Alfred Belande was named Most Valuable Player in the college division and was joined in the Mythical Five by Lanoso, Angeles University Foundation's Mark Cuenco, UE's Marvin Macalalad and USC's Enrico Garcia.

RJC Clark Bautista snagged the high school MVP plum.

Gilford Magnaye scored 12 of his team-high 23 points in the second period where the Cobras threatened to rip the game apart after surging to a 20-21 lead.

The Green Lancers managed to stay within striking distance at the half, 39-45, behind big man Gregory Slaughter who unloaded eight of his 13 points.

Pelgrosa then staged his own show in the third, dumping 12 of his 16 markers while his acrobatic layup in the 5:06 mark gave the Cobras their biggest lead at 68-58.

Calvin Cordova, Cebu Daily News Inc.Sports

NSBC 19—Magnaye 23, Pelgrosa 16, Zamora 17, Belande 11, Bautista 8, Adamos 4, Abuda 2, Quiroga 2, Arrieta 0.

UV 87—Bunga 16, Slaughter 13, Lanoso 14, Alfaro 10, Erhard 7, Glorebard 5, Lim 4, Tamargo 2, Calo 0.

Quarters: 21-19, 41-45, 68-58, 87-82

CONDURA-TUBBATAHA RACE

Herrera, Fetalvero outkick rivals

CEBU NEWCOMER ISABEL MAY BE THE king of Philippine racewalkers but the 13-kilometer distance from Hermosa's turf.

Herrera ran a calculated race to beat Isabel yesterday and win the 1st Condura Run for Tubbataha at the Bonifacio Global City in Taguig.

Isabel, the reigning Mile Marathon champion, settled for third place after Jerald Leagudo outkicked him down the wire to steal runner-up honors.

Herrera, Isabel and Leagudo actually took turns in pacing yesterday's 10K advocacy run. With about a kilometer left in the race, Herrera pulled away from the two. Isabel tried to reclaim the lead but Herrera was clearly the better sprinter between the two.

Herrera, who won the gold in 2,000-meter steeplechase at the 24th Southeast Asian Games in Thailand, clocked 31 minutes and three seconds, seven seconds ahead of Isabel and Leagudo.

Undisputed 30K queen Henrielita Mangica-Bendores topped the distaff race in 35:15. It was Bendores's seventh title this year.

Bendores, an athletics coach at the University of the East, bested Maciel Macalibo, who crossed 36:38 for second spot, and Aileen Talentino, third in 39:26.

Raul Anthony Concepcion, president and CEO of Concepcion Davaikee Inc., won 40-lac more than 1,000 runners.

The top three finishers in the 5k were Bernardo Dionisio (19:52), Christopher Ulbo (19:38) and Jojet de Asis (19:46) in the men's race and Bernadette Magcase (19:34), Alma Ann Ibarosa (19:21) and Evaphin Bardino (19:45) in the women's race.

JUMP. Leagudo (3) catches Crescencio Isabel (1) completely unaware in the stretch.

SPORTSWATCH

Marcelo tops PAL media golf; PDI's Gonzales 2nd

MACLISO CITY—Bible MARCELO CAPturned his third Philippine Airlines interclub media tournament title in six years, cruising to a comfortable 10-shot victory over Tyrone Gonzales on Tuesday.

Marcelo, sports editor of Manila Standard, carded a 40-36, 76 to top the only player to break par in the two-day event played over different courses.

Marcelo fired a 38 at the Bacolod Golf and Country Club in Bacolod and a 42 at the Negros Occidental Golf and Country Club at Murcia.

Gonzales, sports business editor of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, totaled 146 on rounds of 75 and 71.

Lito Tacujan, sports editor of Philippine Star, placed third with 162, winning via countback over Inquirer sports editor Tonypets Manzanilla.

GCAP derby kicks off today

A SLAMMING CONFRONTATION AMONG members of the Gentleman Cockers Association of the Philippines is expected to take the GCAP 5-cock derby opener under way at San Juan Coliseum, with Equipment Complement 2000 as race locket.

The event, first of the GCAP cockfight series, will be the basis in choosing GCAP's 2008 Cocker of the Year.

Gerry Flaviano, with his entry Against All Odds, topped the first legsetter Boy de Roca, Ric Estrada-Dominique Pineda and Eddie Gonzales (brace) shared the second.

Makati special 4-cocker on

BATTLE-TESTED COCKS BRED BY Metro Manila's top cockers collide today in a special 4-cock derby at the Makati Coliseum.

The goal-based prize of P300,000 may go up due to the big number of participants, with Ricardo Cojuangco, Eric Arroyo, Lito Cortinas, Rudy Salacnib and William Cuyvet/PAT-J Sports and Amusement Corp.

Meanwhile, the much-awaited Pinoy Cockers Association of the Philippines (PCAP) 5-cock derby series returns on March 16, followed by the Winning Times 5-cock derby at Pedro Talaid on March 23.

Home in one piece via Northwest

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad

AFTER FLYING HOME NOT VERY calmly by Northwest, star bulldropper Indiana Jhe was lucky to be back alive.

Rolando Flinn, a former national cyclist now based in Chicago, said one of the members of the Japanese media had ganged up on his lovely wife Flor to ask her about their harrowing experience.

"Abala sila Japon, say with loaded like a Japanese," explained Flor, now back to his Chicago habitat. "Ang sabi light boy, loaded cadlish and sloppy gasi asap by a natural field pood in Bogani, Mandaluyong City, on Saturday.

He returned in the company of his best friends but lady after passing by the church for thanksgiving.

Flor, 33, said they were originally scheduled to touch down in Manila at 11 p.m. last Tuesday.

They finally made it back the day after, after a forced overnight stay in Tokyo.

Of course, they had to take a better, less perilous Northwest plane to their flight in Manila on Wednesday, 1990, 08:35 (Asia/T2).

* * *

It's like this: Miss said they took off, as scheduled, from Narita on Tuesday afternoon.

But a little over 30 minutes after passengers had settle some accessories and made starting to be served, the "fasten seat belt" sign flashed.

Passengers were ordered by the captain to entirely stay there in their seats.

The crew also rushed to their respective places to secure themselves.

There was actually no visible panic, no shrieks, no screaming whatsoever.

Also, a little shewery after the long haul from Detroit, could be actually thought they were already touching down at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

* * *

It was too late when he learned they had severely landed in hell.

He said he finally sensed there was something gravely wrong upon seeing the flashing red lights of screaming fire trucks as their plane returned abruptly back to Narita.

Passengers had to be evacuated.

Hhe said this took hours upon hours delayed arrival in Manila. "Kawawang-kawawa ang mga pasahe ko sa Japan, nasa'n ang plane, nasaan nang nasaang Diyos ang nahulog," he said.

Imagine what he would have missed. Miss quipped after showing his first-aid bandage, adding a hint of the mercilessly brushed saddle as they settled upon the close Bib-rich pood hall covered by lipsticks and kingdong.

* * *

OK, they cheated death, but why was there no media report of the plane accident?

"They said it would be aired through CNN," Miss answered.

There was none, not a single hint of what they had been through at Narita.

"Well, how alarming plane international accidents usually get television coverage," he said.

How did this sexy escape being rescued? Did Northwest pull strings or whatever?

Miss just nodded and shook his head.

He sipped the steaming sour goat soup, his favorite, and muttered another thank you prayer.

Heavenly, he concluded.

* * *

Miss doesn't know it, but imagine how he would have been missed here by the national athletes he has been supporting quietly.

National cycling champion Victor Espiritu, Miss's godson, must have learned of his wrong's harrowing experience early on.

This is also the one with the national boxers Hoo had supported and nurtured in the late World Amateur Boxing Championship in Chicago.

Meanwhile, Miss said he was truly saddened by the failure of the RP boxers to advance a single fighter to the Beijing Olympics from the previous weeks Qualifying Tournament in Bangkok.

Another thing: Miss, who had been so eligible to bet and cheer for Manny Pacquiao in all his big fights in the Caesar's Palace, is skipping the Pacquiao-Marquez big bout against Juan Manuel Marquez.

Miss said he did not like the vibration.

Miss added that 29, Pacquiao age, is a perfect period if he is to believe what Chinese friends had told him.

He refused to elaborate.

Rockets' Yao opts for 'screwing' fractured foot

HOUSTON, TEXAS—CHINA'S YAO MING will undergo surgery Monday to fix a stress fracture in his left foot, the Houston Rockets announced on Saturday.

Yao, who is already out for the rest of the National Basketball Association's 2007-08 season and whose long-anticipated Beijing Olympics campaign is in jeopardy, will have the surgery at the Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center in Houston. Rockets doctor Tom Clanton will perform the surgery.

Before the injury, the 27-year-old Yao was averaging one of his less seasons in the NBA, averaging 22.0 points and 10.4 rebounds per game.

Hermann-Texas this season. Yao carried the Rockets on his giant shoulders but his teammates have rallied in his absence winning their first two games without him and extending their winning streak to 14 games.

Olympic hopes

They are seventh in the Western Conference.

The injury could also impact Yao's availability to lead the host country at the Summer Olympics in Beijing in August.

Yao said on Wednesday that he is still hoping to be able to play in the Olympics.

"If I cannot play in the Olympics for my country, then would be the biggest blow of my career," he said.

"I don't want to know how disappointed the people in China would be," he added. "I'll do the best I can to come back, get stronger, protect myself."

Yao says healthy during his first three seasons in the league but has suffered since the 2005-06 campaign, when a toe injury saw him miss 21 games between December and January. He also suffered a broken foot in April 2006, ending his season.

MVP numbers

A year later, Yao fractured the right tibia in his foot on December 23 and did not play again until early March, interrupting a season in which he had put up MVP-caliber numbers.

The team announced Yao's injury on Tuesday and said he would get a second opinion before deciding whether to have the surgery.

Clanton said last week that the surgery would involve placing screws across the bone to hold it together with a recovery time of about four months. The second option was to wear it with a cast and crutches.

Clanton also said last week that he doesn't expect the injury to keep Yao from playing for China in the Olympics in Beijing in August. AFP, AP

Full Report ▸▸

This time, Spain eyes Olympic hoop gold

MADRID—WHEN THE FINAL BUZZER sounded, the Spanish players hugged each other and began dancing around the court. the injured Pau Gasol abandoned his crutches to join his team mates' celebrations and lose back home sweet relief.

Spain's first basketball world championship was greeted with understandably excitement for team coach Pepu Hernandez slipped into the background, overcome with emotion having conceded the game that his father had died just hours before the Final.

"Although I usually believe in letting nothing [e]motional with the team I thought that if I told them it would only distract them and I didn't want anything to affect them at such an important time," Hernandez told Reuters in an interview.

"But two or three minutes from the end all the emotion came to the surface. I didn't know whether to smile or cry, so I just held on to the post nearest [to] me I had of my father."

Spain's success in Japan in 2006 was followed by a silver medal in the European championship in Poland last year.

Now Hernandez and his players have their sights set on a first Olympic gold medal in Beijing in August.

"An Olympic medal would be a reward for all the work we've done over the years but we want to put things in perspective and ensure we are mentally prepared for some time to come and not just a temporary phenomenon."

Perhaps the greatest source of pride for Hernandez is that the basketball side have united a notoriously divided country in a way that is unbelievable in football.

"I remember one man coming up to me in Barcelona and saying 'I don't like basketball but, you know what, your team has brought all Spaniards together'. That is incredible, something very powerful in a country like that." Reuters

Spurs make it 8 straight

Sixers shade Suns, end six-year Phoenix drought

ON SIGHT Howard (top, center) of the Orlando Magic goes coast against a mob of New York defenders at Amway Arena in Orlando, Florida. ▸▸

MILWAUKEE—THE SAN ANTONIO SPURS won their eighth straight game on Saturday, Manu Ginobili scoring 30 points and Tony Parker 26 in a narrow 96-94 road victory over the Milwaukee Bucks.

"Silver certainly very fortunate to get the win," Spurs coach Gregg Popovich told reporters.

The NBA champion Spurs are now the top seed in the Western Conference and hold a six-game lead over the New Orleans Hornets in the Southwest Division.

After a late Milwaukee surge, Ginobili hit a shot with 13.2 seconds remaining to give San Antonio a 95-94 lead and it was 96-94 when Milwaukee's Michael Redd was fouled with one second left. He missed the first shot and deliberately hitted with the second before Andrew Bogut got the rebound and entered on the final buzzer.

Parker was 11-for-16 from the field in the lone of the five games he has played since returning from a knee injury on February 23.

Confident

"He looked really confident," coach Popovich. "He looked more like the Tony that we're used to."

San Antonio's Tim Duncan was held to nine points and ten rebounds.

Redd had 23 points and Bogut added 17 points and 15 rebounds for the Bucks, whose three-game home winning streak was stopped. Milwaukee lost point guard Mo Williams in the third quarter when he was ejected for arguing with referee with the team trailing 59-51.

In Phoenix, the Philadelphia 76ers held on to win in Phoenix for the first time in six years, holding off the Suns, 119-114.

Andre Iguodala scored 32 points for the 76ers, who shot 57 percent. Willie Green scored three crucial free throws in the final 16.2 seconds.

The Suns lost consecutive home games for the first time this season.

In Los Angeles, the Detroit Pistons crushed the Clippers, 103-73.

11th straight

It was the Pistons' 11th straight victory over the Clippers.

Tayshaun Prince had 22 points and 10 assists, helping the Pistons win for the 14th time in 17 games and 31st in their games behind Eastern Conference leader Boston.

Detroit shot 54.3 percent and had 28 assists.

The Clippers dropped their fifth straight overall.

In Memphis, Tennessee, the Utah Jazz Utah sent the Grizzlies to their eighth straight loss with a 113-92 thrashing.

Deron Williams had 13 assists and scored 17 points for the Jazz, which held its two-game buffer over Denver to the Northwest Division.

The eight straight losses is the longest skid of the season for Memphis.

In Orlando, Florida, Dwight Howard had 20 points and 22 rebounds to help the undermanned Magic crush the New York Knicks, 114-92.

Howard drowned in the paint with the Knicks missing Zach Randolph, their second leading scorer and top rebounder.

Rookie Jose Juan Barea scored 16 points for the Magic and only eight players made the list 4-56. Reuters

Hot Ochoa maintains 8-stroke HSBC champions lead

OCHOA

SINGAPORE—LORENA OCHOA STOPPED down five birdies on her way to a 5-under 67 Saturday, stretching the lead in the HSBC Women's Champions to eight strokes going into the final round.

The Mexican star, an eight-time winner in 2007, is now at 15-under Paula Creamer and Another American are her closest pursuers at eight under while Karrie Webb is a stroke further back.

"It was a tough day today, it started in the morning with some rain and I didn't feel as good as rhythm as I had the first few days so it was difficult for me out there," Ochoa said.

Creamer shot a 2-under 70 to finish 8 under along with Sorenstam, who made five birdies but conceded a bogey and a double bogey.

"I was kind of disappointed to lose a shot or two - three back there, particularly when I made a good start and made the turn at 3-under. You kind of like to continue the momentum," said Sorenstam. "But I focused back and there were some good shots and good golf."

Webb had four birdies and two bogeys for fourth place. Lisa Hall of the United States was 5-under after a 2-under 71 round that included four birdies and two bogeys.

Creamer and Sorenstam are the LPGA Tour's first two winners this season. The American won the Honda Open last weekend and Sorenstam is the SBS Open champion.

Miki Saiki (70) and Kim Sei-young (74) of South Korea and Stacy Prammanasudh (73) of the United States were tied for ninth place at 4-under.

American Morgan Pressel (73), Pat Hurst (72) and Angela Stanford (72), and Birdie Kim of South Korea (71) were 2-under.

Louis Rose was 3-under after a 2-under 70 that included four birdies and two bogeys. AP

Vazquez beats Marquez, keeps WBC bantam title

CARSON, CALIFORNIA—ISRAEL Vazquez retained his WBC super bantamweight crown in a split decision over fellow Mexican Rafael Marquez on Saturday.

In the third of their series of title bouts, Judge Max De Luca scored it 114-113 for Vazquez, and Jesse Jon Kirkland Vazquez winning 115-113. Tom Kaczmarek gave Marquez a 114-113 edge.

The fight would have been called a tie if not for referee Pat Russell taking a point away from Marquez in the tenth round for persistently hitting below the belt. An additional point to Marquez would have made the scorecard level.

"That's one and two second times. Finally [he] to take a point away," Russell said.

Marquez said, "In the 10th round, I hit him on the belt line."

Vazquez had lost the title to Marquez in March but won after suffering a broken nose that eventually caused his retirement, before regaining it by technical knockout in six August rounds.

"I gave it my all. I had to make a statement," said Vazquez, who was forced to rally after being knocked down in the fourth round.

"I knew I had to finish strong," said Vazquez. "Some of those shots connected me, but it did not stop me down. I didn't see out of my right eye from the fourth round on."

STRIKE Vazquez (right) lands a deep jab at Rafael Marquez. ▸▸

AP

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	PCT	GB
Atlantic Division				
Boston	49	13	.790	–
Toronto	36	24	.600	11
Philadelphia	33	28	.541	15
New Jersey	28	32	.467	19.5
NY Knicks	19	41	.317	28
Central Division				
Detroit	46	16	.742	–
Cleveland	37	25	.597	9
Chicago	33	28	.541	12.5
Indiana	31	30	.508	14.5
Milwaukee	23	37	.383	22
Southeast Division				
Orlando	38	23	.623	–
Washington	19	38	.455	9.5
Atlanta	34	27	.557	13
Miami	32	28	.533	14
Charlotte	32	29	.525	14.5

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	PCT	GB
Northwest Division				
Utah	38	23	.623	–
Denver	36	25	.590	2
Portland	35	26	.574	3
Seattle	20	39	.339	17.5
Minnesota	13	45	.224	24.5
Pacific Division				
LA Lakers	48	14	.774	–
Phoenix	39	23	.629	7
Golden State	36	25	.590	9
Sacramento	26	32	.448	17.5
LA Clippers	19	38	.333	23
Southwest Division				
San Antonio	39	22	.639	–
New Orleans	33	28	.541	6
Dallas	29	33	.468	11
Houston	28	33	.459	11.5
Memphis	14	44	.241	26

SPORTS

Tshomlee: Just a single day to shine

By Jun Navarro

BEIJING—TSHOMLEE GUTTLEIN CONFIDENTLY ran a test jaw a few flights before the sailors, his eyes exactly fixed on the fatuous activity below.

At three stalls his regime to the flags of different conviction that adorn the ceiling and then on the rows of other cooled seats in the half empty coliseum.

"I'll fill up with flag-waving people and be at ease[illegible] will be exactly similar to that of the Olympics," said Go, unceremoniously glancing at the competing [illegible] from Australia and China during the preliminary round of the 2008 Good Luck Beijing International Taekwondo Invitational Tournament.

The bullet-kicking 27-year-old Go, along with fellow Olympic-bound blade Antoinette Rivera, joined the 32-man-team Team Philippine taekwondo-[illegible] at the University of Science and Technology Beijing gymnasium here, but not as competitors.

TSHOMLEE Go (left) battles a Thai in the 2006 Doha Asiad where he copped a silver medal.

They came here to observe the four-day tourna[illegible] designed to simulate the Olympic taekwondo competitions in August.

"The real thing is different, but getting the feel of the Olympics and ... seeing the people who will run the [illegible] Games[illegible] will give us an idea of what to expect," said Go, who made it to the Olympics through the world qualifying tournament in Manchester, England last year.

Like Go, the 119-pound Rivera is also on her second Olympic stint after advancing from the Asian regional qualifying in Vietnam four months ago.

Unfortunately, no one from among the possible opponents of Go and Rivera in the Beijing Olympics turned up for the 28-nation Good Luck tournament, where the 49 team captured a solitary silver medal through John Paul Lizardo in the -58 kilogram class.

"It hardly matters whether they show up or not," said Go, a silver medalist in the 2006 Asian Games and a winner in the Southeast Asian Games.

"When you're in the Olympics, any player can win the gold provided he's healthy and has the proper mindset on the day of competition."

Entered in the -68 kg class, Go said all the 16 [illegible] in his division are no doubt the best in the world.

"You cannot choose your opponents," he said. "It depends on the draw, but I'll be ready."

Rivera, who came a measly dozen of a bronze medal in the 2004 Athens Olympiad, shared Go's observations.

"There's no way you can single out the fighter you don't want to meet because all of them are good," she said.

Unlike boxing, fights in each taekwondo weight category will be played in one day. At the end of the day, the two contending jins will fight for the gold.

Not a player to settle for gold, Go set the meet's four opponents as his or else progressive from the preliminary round to the finals.

"It's just one day," said Go, who homed-in on the first round in Athens. "We just have to be at the top of your game on that day and beat everybody else."

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St. Scho pep squad scores big double

By Romina S. Aurelio

THE ST. SCHOLASTICA'S COLLEGE PEP squad scored a resounding double victory, ending both the 30th Women's National Collegiate Athletic Association (WNCAA) and 4th Philsports Collegiate Sports Association (WCSA) cheerdancing competitions held in separate venues.

And St. Scholastica frustrated Miriam College on both occasions. It won its second straight WNCAA crown but needed at the Rizal Coliseum and then retained its PCSA title yesterday at the gym of Saint Assumption College.

Centro Escolar University settled for third place in the WNCAA event while La Consolacion College-Manila took second runners-up honors in the PCSA, ahead of College of the Holy Spirit-Manila.

Both championships were St. Scholastica's chief victories in both leagues. It had earlier topped the junior volleyball and swimming tournaments of the revived PCSA and topped WCSA's basketball and badminton events.

In WCSA, Miriam won the overcoming event, La Consolacion clinched the volleyball title and Philippine Women's University the collide tennis and futsal plums.

Miriam tanker Rhonna Arbasio and BIC shooter Mia Villarin took Most Valuable Player honors.

AMAZING GRACE | Members of the St. Scholastica squad show their stuff.

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Record field vying in Corp Cup

MORE THAN 75 FOURAMS TEAMS ARE expected to see action in the Corporate Cup when its 20th edition tees off on March 13 at the Camp Aguinaldo golf Club in Quezon City.

The number of combined entries will be the biggest in the history of the tournament, the only surviving organized corporate competition among players in the business industry.

"This is the [event's] biggest turnout so far," said Bob Schwartz, whose Fil-Estate Group took over the organization of the tournament in 2006 from its founder Virgil Hechanova, former dean of the Philippine Sports Commission.

A bonanza of raffle prizes, including a five-day, four-night Baja Mexico cruise courtesy of Royal Caribbean International and Swire Travel Corp. will spice up the tournament.

The three-day, 36-hole team event rolls its 4-ball players to play with only three counting under the Modano scoring system each day.

The teams will be classified into Group I his players with handicaps of between 5 to 9.9; Group II (10 to 12.9); Group III (13 to 17.99); Group IV (18 and above), Seniors 1 (55 thru 59) and Seniors II (60 and above).

A free practice round and welcome cocktails at the golf club on March 10 will formally open the tournament. Practice rounds will start at the Camp Aldo May Indoor and at Air Defe—before the awards night dinner.

For inquiries, call Joyce Valdez at 0920-9161626 or Cecil Caparas at 0917-4887934.

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Race 2—(Super Select)—Smoke In Venus (5), Angels Wish (1) Dreamcatcher (6), Lucky Lucky (4), Jet Stream (3), Lord Kitten (7), Wind Chill (2)

Race 3—(Pentafecta)—Mr Fever One (7), Speedfull Jet (6), Royal Dynamite (1), Mystery Connection (4), Vicky Mac (2), Sofia Mystery (3), Hello Tough (5)

Race 4—(Pentafecta)—Dragon Lady (3), Mystery Connection (4), Vicky Mac (2), Sofia Mystery (3), Hello Tough (5)

Race 5—(Pentafecta)—Dark Jet (4), Lone Angel (3), Dry Princess (5), Mr Chatterbox (2)

Race 6—(Pentafecta)—Cashew Prince (6), Miss Princess (4), Hello Tough (5), Shining Gem (3)

Race 7—(Super Select)—Miss Magic (1), Indigo Sunset (2), Super Jet (4), Mighty Mars (5)

Race 8—(Super Select)—Lion Tale (6), Dragonlady (7), Mr Indio (12), Magic In Fire (8), Iberian Senorita (3), Hide The Lightning (9)

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INTEGRATED COMPUTER SYSTEMS, INC.

SMC to proceed with beer unit's IPO

Food, packaging, property subsidiaries to follow

By Dianne L. Lucas

PUBLICLY LISTED SAN MIGUEL CORP. (SMC) will proceed with plans to list its beer unit on the Philippine Stock Exchange within the first half of the year despite weak market conditions, the company's president, Ramon Ang, said.

San Miguel Brewery Inc. aims to raise as much as P35.2 billion from an initial public offering (IPO). The company, current spin-off, plans to sell 1.16 billion shares at between P0.50 and P16.20 each.

Ang said the move to list the brewery unit was also part of a broader plan to list all of the company's operating units on the exchange divested according to their lines of business.

"We are listing beer, packaging, and consolidating all the food so they can be listed," he said. "All operating companies will eventually be listed so that management will be more transparent."

But the company's food businesses, SMC will consolidate all operations under Purefoods, which is already listed on the Philippine Stock Exchange, Ang said.

"Third one is packaging," he said. "All our businesses there will be consolidated under one listing, [but] will also be listed."

At the end of the listings spreading said that SMC would have a total of five listed firms under its control, namely the units for beer, food, packaging, property, as well as gin maker Ginebra San Miguel.

This is on top of other firms which will hold the company's expected investments in power generation and mining.

Ang also hinted at the possibility of SMC, the parent firm, eventually being delisted once

(PAGE B7)

Coco exports surged 161% in January

By Amy R. Remo

PHILIPPINE EXPORT OF COCONUT PRODUCTS surged by 161 percent in January to 396,138 metric tons as the economic recession did not affect the country's coconut oil exports, which expanded sales by 270.1 percent to 168,800 MT from last year's 28,777 MT.

Of the total trade, 66 percent or 86,000 MT was delivered to the European market while 59.4 percent or 42,900 MT went to the United States. Other destinations were India with 6,000 MT (3.5 percent share), Malaysia, 5,100 MT (4.7 percent), and

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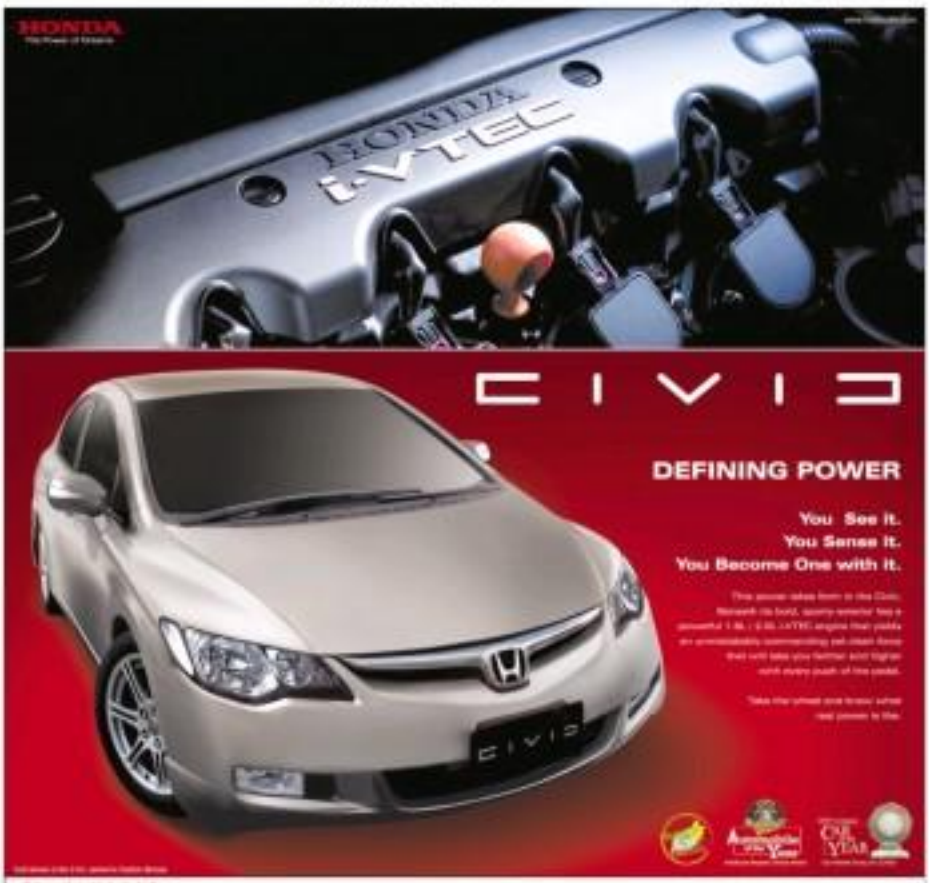

High oil prices seen cutting RP growth to 5.3-5.7% in '08

By Michelle V. Rosca

JAPANESE INVESTMENT BANK Nomura has downgraded its growth forecast for the Philippines for this year to 5.3 percent from 5.7 percent, citing the economy's vulnerability to rising oil prices.

The government's growth target for 2008 is between 6.3 and 7 percent.

"The economy is highly exposed to private consumption, which is sensitive to high crude oil prices," Nomura said in its assessment of rules-and-biases economies. The bank said the Philippines had rolled heavily on consumption spending for its growth more than its neighboring countries did.

Economists said a sound repercussion of higher oil prices, which affects the cost of food and transportation, is reductions in the volume of goods and services purchased.

In 2006, the bank noted, private consumption accounted for 70.3 percent of Philippine real gross domestic product. In contrast, the figure was 48.8 percent for Thailand, 36.2 percent for Indonesia, 50.1 percent for Thailand and 48.6 percent for Malaysia.

The bank also said the Philippines was the most dependent on oil imports, purchasing more than 90 percent of its crude energy requirements from abroad.

In 2006, Nomura said, the Philippines produced only 7.4 percent of its energy requirements. This was substantially lower than Thailand's 51.2 percent, Indonesia's 89.4 percent, Vietnam's 247.6 percent and Malaysia's 491.8 percent.

"Rising oil prices pose a shadow over the Philippine economy's growth prospects in the current year," Nomura said. The bank estimated that for every dollar crude, the trade bank used in selling local oil prices, would rise by $20 a barrel in the year from the previous year's average of $64.29 a barrel.

Dysfunctions in government projects

THE RENEWED WAVE OF PROTEST facing the government was sparked by revelations by Senate witness Jun Lozada on what he called the "dysfunctional procurement system" associated with government projects.

What exactly are the procedural processes involved in identifying, evaluating and implementing government projects? What does system have made the system dysfunctional?

NO FREE LUNCH

Cielito F. Habito

Priority projects

The government formulates a six-year Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) to coincide with the President's term, under the coordination of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda). The MTPDP itself points in broad strokes the development vision and corresponding goals, objectives, strategies and policies to be pursued in the medium term.

Based on the MTPDP, each implementing agency prepares and submits its own Agency Development Plan (ADP) which I like to describe as the document that translates the MTPDP into concrete actions and facilities on the ground. If done properly, the ADP should be the product of development programs and projects that faithfully reflect the MTPDP priorities in concrete projects lined up for implementation.

Lean funding in BOT

With limited funds of its own, government still must source a substantial part of the funding support for the MTPDP from sources foreign, i.e., multilateral agencies like the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, and bilateral country donors like Japan, Australia, Germany and others. Since 2001, China has assumed growing prominence in this list, as funds from foreign sources have become increasingly scarce, but the bulk comes in the form of loans with concessional terms, through lower-than-market interest rates and/or long repayment periods.

In the early 1990s, we pursued a novel way of getting infrastructure projects done so by-off-the-books, by the government, by getting it private sectors to build and operate the facility, collect user fees to recover its investment and obtain a reasonable return, and eventually transfer ownership to the government. This is the build-operate-transfer (BOT) scheme, which the Ramos administration employed to provide critical facilities in power, road and rail transport, among others, in the face of severe government budget constraints.

The proper way

Whether loan-funded or BOT, a government project needs to originally start out as an identified priority indicated by its listing in the MTPDP. The list of MTPDP projects originates from the various sectoral departments, who are presumed to be in the best position to know what the priority requirements are in their respective sectors. Still, there must exercise an "oversight" function and consider how the various project proposals of the different departments should relate to one another in the big picture and fit within the overall resource constraints.

It is the national department, then, who has the responsibility of detailing the nature of the projects it proposes, whether for public funding via loans, or private funding via BOT. It is expected to have the technical competence to draw up the detailed specifications and conduct the necessary feasibility study on its project proposals, which are in turn evaluated by the subsequent Investment Coordination Committee (ICC) of the Neda Board.

Dysfunctions

This is where the dysfunctions lie. Onc, projects that were never in the MTPDP and thus by definition not a priority, are presented by a proponent agency to the ICC as project. ERC was reportedly one such case. Two, while the BOT law provides for the possibility of unsolicited BOT projects, it does so under rigid restrictions and a more stringent evaluation process. Two, widespread connivance between suppliers—other than the proponent agencies themselves—are known to prepare project specifications and even feasibility studies that are submitted to the ICC for evaluation. In such situations, supposedly the required competitive process for choosing the contractor/supplier for the projects once approved becomes a joke. Three, the government claims that the competitive process is ignored because government knows best, so-called unsolicited deals—country's own rules provide otherwise. This need not be a problem with our regular donors as competitive bidding is now the norm. If not international competitive bidding, which is required by multilaterals and common bilateral donors like Japan, these countries that tie their aid or loans provide for competition among their own countries' prospective private suppliers. Unfortunately, China, a bilateral we expect to be the donor block, requires neither it actually handpicks the supplier—as it did with ZTE in the NBN project.

All these dysfunctions are pointed in the aborted ZTE-NBN deal—and that's how the whistleblowers started, "this can't be! there's to be more out there we haven't seen yet.

Comments are welcome at chabito@yahoo.info

Coco exports surged ...

Front page 6

Japan, 6,000 MT (4.4 percent).

Imports of copra meal likewise soared by 73.4 percent to 38,798 MT from 20,589 MT.

Since contained a leading market, consuming 83 percent or 38,222 MT, landed by countries like 2 importers Vietnam, which bought 1,577.3 tons or 83,277 MT.

Other buyers were Japan with 4,000 MT (11.2 percent) and New Zealand with 288 MT (0.76percent).

Meanwhile, dedicated coconut exports shrank by 10.7 percent to 6,366 MT from last year's 14,450 MT, while oleochemicals suffered a decline of 2.8 percent to 14,072 MT (in copra terms) from 14,480 MT.

Earlier, Dcop said it expected local coconut production to bounce back this year to 2.46 million MT due largely to favorable weather conditions.

Dcop estimates showed that the projected output would exceed the 2007 level by 12.1 percent.

It also projected exports of coconut products to grow by 15.9 percent in 2008 to 1.91 million MT in copra terms, due to an expected improvement in output during the year.

Estimates of coconut production in 2007 were contained at 1.65 million MT in copra terms, a decline of 10.9 percent from 2.034 million MT a year ago due to reduced coconut harvest.

Dcop also gave the following export forecasts for 2008: coconut oil at 900,000 MT (an increase of 17.3 percent from 643,839 MT in 2007's export terms) at 480,000 MT (up by 6.1 percent from 376,000 MT); desiccated coconut at 125,000 MT (up by 8.3 percent from 116,797 MT); and oleochemicals at 140,000 MT (up by 25.8 percent from 111,264 MT).

Pag-IBIG Fund to invest ₱1B in local mutual funds

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE HDMF-COS-tituted Home Development Mutual Fund or Pag-IBIG Fund plans to invest P1 billion to local mutual funds and start actively trading bonds as a index-fund strategy to boost its investment earnings in this low-interest rate environment.

Pag-IBIG Fund president Romeo Quimbo told reporters that Pag-IBIG would have to be more "pro-active" in its investment strategy and unlock more value from its liquid assets worth P56 billion, about a quarter of the housing provident fund's P202 billion in assets as of end-2007.

"Like any financial institution, it's difficult to make money now as much as we used to three years ago, when you would just be sitting in your office, put money in government securities and make a lot of money as market rates for your stakeholders," Quimbo said.

Quimbo said 87 percent of Pag-IBIG's investible money now is long-term government securities of varying maturities.

"The manner of the fund itself as a long-term fund does not make trading a principle amounts but because of the very low yields on long-term instruments, we must have to really start trading. That's a specific direction we have to look at," he explained.

Some of the fund's assets, for instance, were bought five years ago and their prices have gone up because of the bond's downward rates.

"They are economically available to clip. The question is do you want to make the gains here [by simply awaiting maturity] or do you want to unstack it today? That has been always our dilemma. We feel we have to make money elsewhere," he said.

Quimbo said Pag-IBIG had very cash-prudent people who could make more money for the fund by trading government securities in the secondary market.

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PFI-AC Global Bond Fund	1.3883	1.3895
PFI-AC Peso Fixed Income Fund	1.0669	1.0661
PFI-AC Peso Equity Fund	1.1151	1.1056
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Security Bank OKs ₱500-M loan to Aboitizland

By Doris C. Dumlao

MEDIUM-SIZED SECURITY BANK Corp. has provided a ₱500-million loan facility to Aboitizland Inc., the real estate arm of the Cebu-based Aboitiz conglomerate.

In a statement, SBC said it entered into the loan agreement to fund Aboitizland's latest property development foray in the Queen City of the South.

"The growth prospect for the property industry in Cebu is truly phenomenal. The increased demand for both residential and commercial development is prompting leading real estate companies to expand their portfolio to match the needs," said SBC senior vice president Fil-Cris May Ho.

"Security Bank recognizes this trend and extends its full support to help property companies respond to the local market demand," she added.

Aboitizland will use most of the loan proceeds to develop a 1.1-hectare, mixed-use, urban village within Metro Cebu called The Residences. This residential and commercial project is envisioned to revolutionize urban living standards in Cebu.

A portion of the loan proceeds will be used to support the development of its business process outsourcing venture, iMEC, located at the Pueblo Verde Commercial Center in Mactan, Lily said.

Aboitizland designs and develops communities for industrial, commercial and medium- to high-end residential use. It is part of the Aboitiz group, one of the country's oldest and biggest conglomerates with interest in power distribution and transmission, banking, food production, industrial gas production and remittances.

In 2005, SCB attained a 42-per cent growth in net profits to ₱2.7 billion, partly due to the 55-per cent expansion in its loan portfolio.

"By leveraging on the client relationships we have cultivated over the years, we have managed to steadily grow our portfolio of quality loan assets that yielded favorable results for the past years. We hope to continue to replicate this success by maintaining good client relations," Sty said.

Maybank

Earnings ...

From page B1

positive note, underlying weaker expectations of more rate hikes due to the backdrop of tension in the political arena.

The Philippine Stock Exchange Index (PSEi) gained 49.75 points or 1.62 percent for the week to close at 3,129.99. Trading was sluggish as investors stayed defensive, allowing morning and all weeks records (for the foreign).

For most of the week, trading values remained below the ₱3 billion mark, and ending close to ₱2 billion on a couple of days, pressured by profit taking by punters.

Apart from the focus on blue-chip earnings, All Capital predicted that mining and oil stocks could continue to benefit this week from the record prices marked by oil, gold and base metals.

Dorian C. Lanao

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Peso said to be trading below par

But BSP says IMF findings must be treated with great caution

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO, WHICH SURGED 60 nearly 19 percent last year, may have been undervalued for the month even the last six years, according to two key foreign exchange assessments used by the International Monetary Fund.

In a recent report to Congress, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said that, from 2001 to November 2007, the peso traded below its appropriate level, based on two methodologies used by the IMF.

The peso was undervalued by 12 percent according to one IMF tool, which measures "macroeconomic balances." The second IMF approach, which calculates "external sustainability," indicated that the peso was undervalued by 14 percent. But according to a third IMF methodology, which took into account the "equilibrium" exchange rate, the local currency was 8 percent overvalued.

The BAS however, does not settle on any of the three IMF yardsticks and, instead, looks at the trend in the real effective exchange rate (REER) of the peso against other currencies.

Tetangco said the IMF could reinforce its REER approach using the IMF's three methodologies. But he added that the underpinnings of the IMF estimates must be treated with "a great deal of caution," noting that the analyses did not factor in movements in the real exchange rate.

The peso stood at 51.40 against the US dollar at end-2001, rising over the years to 41.50 as of end-November. The currency is now trading at eight-year highs, closing at 40.40 in the procedure as of last Friday.

From 2001 to mid-February this year, the peso appreciated by 21.7 percent against the greenback, keeping its stop-rally most currencies in the region. Over the same period, the Thai baht and Korean won have risen at a faster pace of 36.6 percent and 31.3 percent, respectively.

The BSP has stuck to its policy to let the market determine the exchange rate and intervene only during periods of excessive volatility.

Napocor likely won't borrow this year

By Michelle V Remo

NATIONAL POWER Corp., which used to be the foremost borrowing [illegible] arm, likely will not borrow again this year, relying on its own revenue generation capability to meet its expenditure requirements for the second straight year.

A Department of Finance official said the power firm has been implementing cost-cutting measures in the past two years. The measures have significantly improved its financial standing.

"Cost-reduction programs were a big help," the finance official said. "Hopefully, Napocor would borrow again this year."

The source cannot be identified because he is not authorized to issue statements on behalf of the DOF.

Napocor's financial problems dated during the power crisis of the late 1990s, when it entered into dollar-denominated take-or-pay contracts with independent power producers. Napocor's financial woes forced it to engage in huge borrowings, some of which were guaranteed by the government.

To reduce the financial burden brought on by Napocor, the government began privatizing some of the power firm's assets. And to make it attractive to investors, the government in 2004 decided to shoulder P200 billion of the power firm's debts.

Based on reports, Napocor's remaining debt is estimated at about $6 billion, 40 percent of which will fall due between 2009 and 2012.

In 2005, Napocor ended years of operating in the red, and posted a net profit of P66 million. The following year, Napocor registered about P200 million in net profit.

After its operations became self-sustaining, Napocor last year doubled its loan share from borrowing to its guaranteeing obligations were sufficiently covered by the revenues it generated.

Although the final report on Napocor's performance last year is still being worked out, the power firm likely posted more profit, the government.

Rival networks vie for $12.6-M gaming market

By Rue T. Chinenche

RIVAL TV NETWORKS ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. and GMA Network Inc. are vying their competition to the gaming arena as their respective gaming units race to dominate the estimated $12.6-million gaming market in 2008.

The networks are taking different routes to gaming glory. ABS-CBN has its wholly-owned unit Amped Games. The unit registered 2.5 million subscribers for 2007 and wants to double that to 5 million in 2008, said Mitch Packer, Amped Games chief executive.

Amped Games, which is more than three years old, is making more downloadables for its Amped Games Cards and is expanding its sales force to cover more provincial markets.

GMA is catching up by forging an P800-million joint venture called I-Play with listed conglomerate JPMI Corp., which has the cutting-edge player base of 2.5 million.

"As technology and the market evolves, a network needs to explore new channels to remain relevant," GMA chief Felipe Gozon said during the launch of I-Play.

I-Play gives GMA instant access to the gaming market, and the unit is more focused on the fast-growing market for casual gamers, which are essentially simple puzzles games compared to the complicated role playing games. To maximize its earning potential, I-Play will use online gaming as a new form of advertising, leveraging local content and talent.

Will Montano and Marian Rivera become a character in one of the games of I-Play? GMA Network chair Felipe Gozon did not rule out that possibility since Indian-Filipino actress Nancy Castiglione will be featured in the upcoming game.

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Exports to Taiwan plunge

By Bonnie P.F. Domingo

MERCHANDISE EXPORTS TO TAIWAN slid by 17.95 percent to $2.26 billion in 2007 from $2.75 billion in 2006, as Manila and Taipei look for alternative goods to trade.

Latest data from Taipei's Government Information Office show that the value of shipments from the Philippines dropped from about $2.76 billion in 2006.

Also, two-way merchandise trade with Taiwan declined by 8.6 percent in 2007 to $7.2 billion from $7.163 billion the previous year.

Taiwanese shipments to the Philippines were valued at a total of $4.96 billion, an increase by 0.75 percent from $4.69 billion.

Taiwan thus continued to maintain the upper hand with a surplus of about $2.68 billion in 2007, increasing by 34.75 percent from $1.711 billion in 2006.

Further, the Taiwan OEO reported that the Philippines was Taiwan's 14th largest trading partner last year, accounting for 1.53 percent of the island economy's total global trade, which was valued at about $960.157 billion.

China is Taiwan's largest trading partner with a 19.42 percent share or $186.5 billion of the latter's aggregate trade in terms of value.

The Philippines ranked 29th among the largest sources of Taiwan's imports, accounting for about 1.04 percent of total inbound shipments worth some $119.33 billion.

This was two ranks down from the end of the third quarter for year, when the Philippines was still ahead of France and Congo in terms of the value of shipments to Taiwan.

While trade figures are largely determined by the tariffs of various duties and charges, which is attributed to free trade deals, efforts of both governments have expressed interest in exploring other products that have not traditionally been traded.

During a visit to Manila last November, Taiwan's Minister of Economic Affairs Steve Chen said his country was exploring possible arrangements for the importation from the Philippines of coal and gravel as demand continues to dramatically outpace domestic supply in the island.

Coal and gravel is one of our priority areas in relation to trade with the Philippines," Chen had said. "We import 27 percent of the supply needed in our construction industry.

Aussie oil firm plans to drill wells in Q3

By Abigail L. Ho

AUSTRALIAN PEAK HOT GEL Ltd. plans to drill two wells within Service Contract 41 in the Sandakan Basin in the third quarter of the year.

In a presentation to investors posted on its official website, the company said its planned drilling activities in SC 41 would be "very challenging," even, considering the potential of the contract area.

Top Oil, in mid-2007 acquired 713.6 square kilometers of 3D seismic data in SC 41. More than 12 leads were identified and seven of these have hydrocarbon indications were observed.

These leads, the company said, indicated a potential of up to more than 100 million stock tank barrels of oil.

The company is currently working on securing a rig to drill the first of possibly two wells in the Sabah contract area by mid-year or in the third quarter.

"Top Oil has a multi-million dollar strategy of capturing underexplored areas to create bodied exploration. SC 41 is a very high potential block with Filipino local terms. More than 15 leads have been identified on 3D seismic with size up to greater than 100 m-Bcm each lead barrels," the presentation stated.

Being located in Cuyon Bonzo, the company said in an earlier statement that SC 41 showed a lot of potential as the area contained numerous large oil and gas fields operated by major oil and gas companies.

"Top believes that SC 41 has good potential to discover material volumes of hydrocarbons and be a game changer for the company," Top Oil said.

SC 41 spans an area approximately 4,200 square kilometers, with water depths ranging from 200 meters to 2,000 meters.

Apart from Top Oil, which holds a 50 percent stake in the service contract, other participants in Sulawesi are Pan Orient Energy (30 percent), Oriental Petroleum and Minerals Corp. (5.963 percent), Philodrill Corp. (5.396 percent), Philex Mining Corp. (2.204 percent), Anglo Philippine Holding Corp. (1.879 percent), South China Resources Inc. (1 percent), Intellibond Resources Inc. (0.600 percent) and Universal Holdings Corp. (0.490 percent).

PHILAM PLANS

Winning sales agency continues to excel two years in a row

What are the secrets of a successful real estate sales team? How do a consistent number-five performer in many seasons in three sales centers of Philam Homes suddenly outperform more than a dozen of the best sales executives in the company and become one of the business centers most top-performing sales executives? Is it a special company culture or a distinctive leader? Philam Plans, a full-time marketing arm of the real estate arm of Philam Life, may have the right answers to questions.

Real estate sales team that has demonstrated these positive traits in a unique and formidable, yet truly successful fashion is Philam Plans, a full-time marketing arm of the real estate arm of Philam Life. The company's leading private market investment company, education and healthcare. Presenting to many of the officers of the Philippine Business Conglomerates, Philam Plans, a full-time marketing arm of the real estate arm of Philam Life, has been consistently delivering excellent sales performance in the last two years. Philam Plans is one of the few companies in the real estate industry that has been consistently delivering excellent sales performance in the last two years.

Philam Plans is one of the few companies in the real estate industry that has been consistently delivering excellent sales performance in the last two years.

SMC to proceed . . .

From page B1

all its units are already being publicly traded.

"If we no longer need SSWC's listing), we will check on the status," he said.

"We will have another listed vehicle for other investments," the SMC chief said, adding that the listing process will be done transparently rather than through so-called "backdoor listings" common for such activities.

"We don't like backdoor listing because [they've] not very transparent," he said. We mostly

as possible, all listings (will be) through IPO."

During a briefing with reporters, SMC chief Eduardo "Ding" Cojuangco Jr. also defended the company's decision to move into areas like mining and power generation, which critics said was an effort to near the company's core competency.

He said that the returns on the new business lines were better than what they're from the food industry at this point, and added that the expertise could be gained by hiring the right people to run the businesses.

Coca-Cola to rev up . . .

From page B1

the [Philippine] market," he said, in he pointed out that the company has seen impressive gains in the sales volumes of its flagship product around the world, the local market included.

"The Philippines is in our top 15 markets worldwide and it has the potential to become one of our top 10 markets," Brant said.

He explained that Coca-Cola was reshaping with how its local operations were being run just before it recognized its local opportunities last year.

While a lot of work remains to be done to regain the company's position in the local market, Brant said that significant gains have already been made, especially with its aggressive marketing efforts in recent months.

"There is so much we to do, but we think are going the right way," he said.

In particular, he said he wanted to make Coca-Cola products more visible to consumers in stores, supermarkets and other advertising media, especially since the bulk of Coke sales are made at the last minute.

"Seventy percent of purchases of our products are made on impulse," he said, citing consumer studies.

To this end, he said that the company was investing more on its network of 100,000 chain and distributors by providing more refrigerators, signs and other marketing tools.

Brant also discussed talk that Coke was being set to otherwise leverages like bottled water, as was rumors become more health-conscious.

Instead, he said that the market was only demanding more diversification — going forward that the company is responding to by broadening its product strategy, either by acquiring other brands or developing new products like the recently launched Coke Zero.

"There is room for everybody," he said, adding that Brant assumes "plenty of growth left in sparkling beverages" in the local market.

INFOTECH

Going back to basics with Philips GoGear

THE PHILIPS SA6125 GoGear and headphones—a no-frills affair

By Rica T. Chichioco

THE PHILIPS SA6125 GoGear with 2 gigabyte flash memory is a good starter mp3 player—more likely to please users who want a no-frills device for their audio needs.

It does look like an iPod, but has a far simpler proposition. No touch screen, no memory card slot, and no Wifi or wireless network here. Instead, it hooks up to a computer via a USB connection.

Simply plugging it into a computer allows song and video downloading via Windows Media Player. Loading songs is easy enough even a 10-year-old can do it on his own with other players.

The sound quality is good, and so is the video quality. The 3.5-inch LCD display is larger than most players, and nothing makes the WMV images stand out.

The sound is also good, as it is routed through the supplied in-ear earphones. Solid sound from the earphones, tightly control the two-hundred earphones jack with the front neck, so but do not push the jack all the way in. The result is a loose, in-ear sound coming from the loud speakers.

Letters to the SA6125, which plays already with over 20 presets, while flipping through the presets. If left unattended, the GoGear displays the time in a screensaver. Of course, the sound playback can also play in the background while other non-audio tasks are ongoing.

There are other features worth exploring. One of the three is the lock dialer, which locks all keys ex-

cept those for volume. This is good for use while on the go, to prevent any accidentally erasing voice recordings.

Yes, the player has a voice recorder that is simple to operate, which is usually not the case among mp3 players. While the voice recording feature is just an add-on, its sound capture capability is good. The recordings are stored in WAV format.

The Philips SA6125 GoGear with 2 gigabyte flash memory may be a little chunky and does not have many features, but for a user who prefers to go back to the basics, it certainly does the job.

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Ericsson takes cue from TV experience

FUTURE TV: Consumers will want their TV experiences to be personal and interactive.

ERICSSON HAS IDENTIFIED the individual TV experience as the concept that will drive business growth for operators over the next 18 years.

To deliver the individual TV experience, the telecom television industry will go through a massive strategic shift, requiring out-of-the-box thinking, new business approaches, flexible organizations and proven technologies.

Ericsson underestimated the telecommunications experience by making Full Service Broadband a reality.

Jan Hilsenby, senior vice president and head of Ericsson's Multimedia organization, says Ericsson is now moving toward an individual-based TV experience.

"Now we are enabling people to create their own experience the way they watch television," Hilsenby says. "This means TV can be watched anywhere, on any device, and on all types and sizes of screens. This offers viewers freedom, choice and control like the internet."

Research carried out by Ericsson's Consumer Lab has found that the same target group has to have TV services is made up of "digital natives"—young, socially global consumers who have grown up with ubiquitous connectivity, an explosion of digital content and a strong desire to connect.

"It gives them consumers the TV experience they want, personalization and interactivity are not the only requirements," Hilsenby says. "TV also needs to be easy to use, affordable and of high quality.

"The commitment to the individual TV experience can be seen today in our open-architecture approach to full-service broadband, ecosystem leadership, and the overarching solution offering we are bringing to the market."

Kurt Jaib, head of Ericsson's Networks organization, says that Ericsson's customers need high-capacity networks with both fixed and mobile access to be able to deliver the individual TV experience to consumers.

"In order to differentiate true TV services you need a powerful network," Jaib says. "We call that network full service broadband."

In addition to the technological solutions and consumer insight, Ericsson has a Global Service organization with 29,000 service professionals and systems integrators often that can help operators deploy and integrate their TV services in the future.

"In the Global Services organization, we have systems integration professionals, including TV experts spread around the world, close to customers," says Franck Boudinet, head of Systems Integration and Telecom Management Solutions at Ericsson's Global Services organization.

Ericsson has already deployed more than 60 mobile TV and video solutions and more than 100 IPTV commercial and trial networks for its customers.

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'E' for empowering technology from Acer

IT IS THE MISTRA OF COMputer manufacturer Acer to make people's digital lives better via coming up with products that are easy to use yet powerful enough to meet every computing requirement.

This the company does through its "Empowering Technology," with the ultimate objective of breaking the barrier between people and technology. With Empowering Technology, Acer says software bugs of business and consumer users is frequently used settings and functions be a more enhanced and productive computing life, either during work or leisure time.

Using customer-centric, User-oriented Empowering Technology sets more simple and powerful through the Acer Empowering Technology toolbar available in Acer notebooks and desktops with a more unified and quick-to-use interface that guarantees one-click access when launching Empowering Technology utilities or enlisting Widget mode, where colorful widgets allow full administration.

By simply pressing the Empowering Key on the toolbar, Acer presents a whole slew of powerful features that other desktops have yet to match.

"It is our core belief that solid user experience attributes needs should be taken into consideration when new designs in products," explains Manuel Wong, Acer Philippines's general manager. "With these innovations in mind, we will continue to discover and develop even more powerful technological features that would help people evolve, as soon as possible, a simple and worry-free digital life in the future."

Nationwide anti-dengue campaign intensified

THE DEPARTMENT OF Health (DOH) recently announced the start of its nationwide anti-dengue drive called TI-DOH LABAN Sa DENGUE program.

Leading the kick-off drive last February 20 at the CARAGA region, Health Secretary Francisco T. Duque III announced that due to weather-related occurrences, hoping that the public would become more suspicious of any symptom closely associated with dengue and to seek medical attention right away.

"Dengue is now a year-round threat because of the rising temperature and unpredictable weather that make the rains come in what should be dry and warm months or the year. Because of this phenomenon, there are already many reported dengue cases this early part of 2008," Duque revealed.

Expand operations

The health secretary also encouraged local government officials to expand their search and destroy operations so it would include vacant lots and empty homes where dengue mosquitoes can recently thrive.

"We cannot be complacent about these things. We understand that it is all futile to keep into private properties but we must invoke public safety and health and expand our "search and destroy" operations anywhere that the dengue mosquito can breed and thrive, it is useless to our household to practice, say, in our aggressive sanitation drive and vector control when the next house is harboring mosquitoes. In the end, dengue prevention is about community action and we need the local governments to help us with this," Duque stressed.

Meanwhile, the DOH has initially allocated P3.5 million to the Research Institute For Tropical Medicine (RITM) to purchase reagents needed for its dengue surveillance.

Tell right away

Duque said that with these reagents, doctors will be able to tell right away which are dengue suspects from real dengue cases.

The budget is also hoped to enable epidemiologic experts of the country to identify which strain of the dengue virus is circulating in a particular community.

Among the objectives of this procedure is to identify suspect cases and fully investigate them during routine surveillance and disease outbreaks.

Helpful

Duque said that this is going to be particularly helpful in areas where there are many reports of clustering of dengue cases which may indicate a high probability of an outbreak.

"With the availability of reagents, MTM can run hundreds of samples per day and make the results available within 24 hours. So, the results of blood samples collected from suspected clustering of cases sent to RITM for confirmatory test will be immediately available. In other words, this is going to be a big help in confirming cases before declaring if there is an outbreak or none," Duque explained.

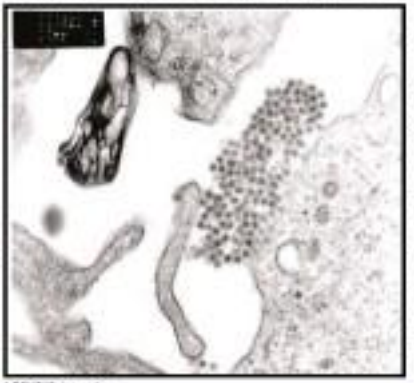
The health chief added that the other objectives of RITM's dengue laboratory surveillance are to provide serological tools, to determine the circulating serotype, to provide baseline data on the prevalence of dengue in the country and to recommend strategies for prevention and control.

Dengue War Room

On the other hand, Duque also disclosed today that the DOH has established a Dengue War Room at the National Epidemiology Center to facilitate faster tracking of reported dengue cases in different parts of the country and immediately identify cases where clustering of cases has been noted.

"This war room is going to be the DOH's dengue operation center where all reports of dengue cases towards, be it sporadic or clustering, will be collected and analyzed. The war room will help us identify the areas where the most possible outbreak will take place. With such information, we can now swiftly send help and immediately arrest possible spread of dengue cases," the health chief explained.

http://www.doh.gov.ph



A DENGUE virus up close

Aedes Aegypti

Dengue signs and symptoms

ONE SHOULD suspect dengue if an individual suddenly develops fever with severe headache, muscle and joint pains (also known as myalgias and arthralgias), the severe pain that is experienced is often called 'breakbone fever' or 'breakmuscle-classical' symptoms.

With regard to dengue rashes, they often come as bright red petechiae and usually appears first on the lower limbs and the chest.

In some patients, they spread to cover most of the body. There may also be gastritis with some combination of associated abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.

Some cases develop much milder symptoms which can, when no rash is present, be misdiagnosed as influenza or other viral infection. Because of this, travelers from tropical areas may inadvertently pass on dengue in their home countries, having not been properly diagnosed at the height of their illness.

Dengue can occur can pass on the infection only through mosquitoes or blood products and only adults they are still febrile.

A classic dengue fever lasts about six to seven days, with a smaller peak of fever at the ending end of the disease (the so-called "biphasic pattern"). Clinically, the platelet count will drop until the patient's temperature is normal.

In severe severer cases, the patient will also experience higher fever, hemorrhagic phenomena, thrombocytopenia, and increase concentration while a small proportion of cases may lead to dengue shock syndrome, a condition that has a high mortality rate.

Prevention measures

AT THE moment there is no commercially available vaccine for the dengue flavivirus, the culprit behind dengue.

However, there is an ongoing vaccine development program called the Walter Reed Dengue Vaccine Initiative. Set up in 2003, the program aims to accelerate the development and introduction of dengue vaccines(s) that are affordable and accessible to poor children in endemic countries.

In fact, Thai researchers are testing a dengue fever vaccine on 2,000 to 4,000 human volunteers after having successfully conducted tests on animals and small groups of human volunteers while a number of other vaccine candidates are entering phase I or II testing.

Mosquito control

Primary prevention of dengue mainly resides in mosquito control, i.e. eliminating or reducing the mosquito vectors for dengue.

This is why public spraying for mosquitoes is the most important aspect of this sector. Application of larvicides to standing water is most effective in the long term control of mosquitoes. Initiatives to eradicate pools of standing water (such as in flowerpots) have proven useful in controlling mosquito-borne diseases. Promising new techniques have been recently reported from Oxford University on rendering the Aedes mosquito pest-sterile.

In 1999, scientists from the Queensland Institute of Research in Australia and Vietnam's Ministry of Health had introduced a scheme that encouraged children to place a water bug, a species called Mesocyclops, in water tanks and discarded containers where the mosquito, particularly the Aedes aegypti, can lay eggs to thrive.

Although not as effective as using pesticides and require participation of the community, this is viewed as being more cost-effective and more environmentally friendly.

At the individuals personal prevention should include the use of mosquito nets, repellents containing 98% DEET covering exposed skin, use of DEET-impregnated helmets, and avoiding outdoor areas.

Make It Double!

Dengue Prevention Program at Home

Preventing DENGUE if like being a challenge to all of us for so many reasons. For one reason, we can't be satisfied by the using of solutions of that were something to pain, agony and death. Every organization and individual fight the issues from their own perspective. The awareness of the people, the functional interactions and transparency for a fundamental basis, as it is now a call for all of us to do our share and prompt ourselves, which if doable, do your very own version of dengue prevention program at home.

LEADS ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH (LEADS EH) understands the problem for many years and never stopped looking for new ways. To fulfill this commitment, LEADS EH has formed strategic alliances with research and development companies to introduce to their valuable pest control solutions. Introduced Dengue this a month of May, LEADS EH and Allwin Chemicals, Inc. of Japan established a partnership, bringing Vectron 10EW and Victor 20 WP to the Philippines. Vectron 10EW and Victor 20 WP offer excellent SAFETY PROFILE as well as the unmatched EFFECTIVENESS against mosquitoes and other insects. It is safe to use as well as gentle effective on most insects on their hosts.

These products prevent diseases carrying mosquitoes to reach unsuspected prey victims indirectly and outdoors. They can work odorless and non-irritant. Vectron 10 EW has the ability to produce total kockup for up to 12 months without harming you and your family. Yes, you read DOUBLE! The months of safe solution and effective protection against dengue vector by introducing Dengue-carrying mosquitoes. Simply spray on exterior and walls according to the label instructions and you're done. Victor 20 WP is a powerful yet gentle effective formulation, recommended Vectron 10 EW to be sprayed INSIDE your home infestation to the walls and ceilings and Victor 20 WP should be sprayed OUTSIDE such as walls, gardens, crevices, bush area, grass and other breeding sites of mosquitoes.

It is important that we take precautionary measures before the harmful effects of the dengue fever. Let Vectron 10 EW spray and Victor 20 WP work for you – that is your double protection at home.

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In order to protect highly susceptible individuals, Leads Environmental Health, with its tradition of upholding excellent products, made an alliance with companies around the world to develop household products.

The company said these products, which are developed to target a wide range of disease-carrying insects, including termites, have been extensively researched and have passed the International standards for efficacy.

Here in the Philippines, Leads EH provides superior products with truly amazing and exceptional features. Bestselling these products include the Bifen 2.5 EC Termiticide. A product of FMC Corp. of the United States, this proven termite nonrepellent has more than five years of protection against termite infestation. This product could be used both for pre-construction and post-construction treatment.

Another new product from Leads EH is the Pivot Dry SFG, an effective wood protectant against bedbugs, ants and anobiids. With its ready-to-use formulation, you only need to spray or brush it on wood furniture and furnishings and you are assured of long lasting protection.

Leads EH recently announced in a statement that the company will continue to find ways to fight these dreadful insects. "While the company's powerful collection of Vectron 10 EW and Victor 20 WP these products are our customer's best defense against vector-borne diseases inside and outside homes."

The company also added that all Leads EH products offer guaranteed protection and peace of mind with their high safety margins and affordability.

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Coca-Cola to rev up sales in RP

By Dwire L. Laus

THE COCA-COLA COMPANY, THE WORLD'S largest beverage firm, will continue to expand its operations in the country by increasing its long-neglected distribution network, its president said.

In an interview with reporters last Friday, Coca-Cola president Muhtar Kent said the company's local unit—Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc.—has redeployed as many as 2,000 personnel as part of efforts to speed up the time for its beverages to reach the market.

"We have a strong belief in the future of

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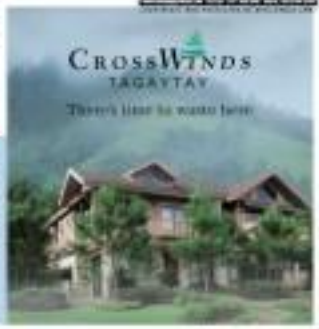

15 yrs after leaving BSP, Cuisia gets his due

Philam group chief new Management Man of the Year

By Dante L. Lucas

WHEN JOSE R. FERNANDEZ Jr., Gabriel C. Singson and Rafael B. Buenaventura ended their stints at the helm of the country's central bank, they were immediately honored by the Management Association of the Philippines (MAP) with the prestigious Management Man of the Year award.

The race was different with former Central Bank of the Philippines Governor Jose "Joey" L. Cuisia Jr. who ended his term in 1993 and was conferred what is arguably the country's highest management award only this year—almost 15 years after.

"It is a very prestigious award and I'm deeply honored to receive it," Cuisia says.

Cuisia is one of the most colorful and outspoken personalities in Philippine business.

He is a favorite among business reporters for his candid remarks and strong opinions which always make good copy but sometimes land him in trouble with other businessmen or government regulators.

During an interview with Inquirer BusinessMonday Cuisia—who also heads the Philippine American Life and General Insurance Co., associates that his strong beliefs, like zero-zone position on certain issues, coupled with his candor, were probably among the factors in not as long for his peers to agree on recognizing him with the award.

"Maybe," he says with a chuckle. "Maybe that's one [reason]. But I feel that I have to be transparent. I'm very straightforward. I say what's on my mind...and I don't mince words."

He adds, "Sometimes it's not good because I may put the company at risk. So I also have to consider that."

Controversial positions

But Cuisia is no stranger to controversial positions, having stood at the forefront of the so-called Maceda group (named after then Sen. Ernesto Maceda) that opposed the entry of foreign banks in the country.

He recounts how he was wanted by the owners of what are now the Hongkong Bank of Asia and American Express (AMEX) Bank because he was very visible when lobbying efforts.

"Wednesday will take that against me," he quotes one of the bank's owners as having told him.

"I'm sure they were very uncomfortable," he says of his employers since he put his head down on their table to express his opposition about his comportment.

I said, "If you recall, you can have my resignation right now. I hope you have no embarrassment that I have to [express] my views."

And express his views loudly, he did, prompting President Aquino to tap his expertise to clean up the post-Marcos era Social Security System, leveraging the youngest BSP administrator at 47, then eventually moving to the central bank when Fernandez retired.

There, he instituted reforms which eventually led to the liquidation of the foreign exchange market and further liberalization that which allowed foreign banks to operate in the country.

With the central bank falling into bankruptcy in 1992 for funding heavy petroleum subsidies, and having to be recapitalized as the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Cuisia found himself out of government and soon after joined the ABS group as the country's head of Philamlife.

Better society

Leaving government, however, did not mean an end to his outspoken ways and his advocacies.

"Though I am no longer in the public service, I believe it is the duty of every Filipino citizen to work for a better society," he says in his acceptance speech before the MAP society. "The fight against corruption, for instance, more imperative after we have read and heard about the incredible excesses of misdeeds, greed and rampant corruption in government."

Cuisia carries his strong views with him to the board room of the influential Makati Business Club—a group that has already asked his President Arroyo to resign in 2005—where he sits as one of the trustees.

And while Cuisia the evangelist is candid, sometimes to the point of making other people squirm in their seats, he emerges again the same from the people

(CONTINUED ON B-2)

Confidence of Asia Pacific CEOs remains strong–PwC

THE BUSINESS CONFIDENCE OF Asia Pacific CEOs continues to grow stronger, increasing to 36 percent in 2007, compared to 40 percent in 2006. This, according to PricewaterhouseCoopers' 11th Annual Global CEO Survey released by its local member firm Isla Lipana & Co., reflects the fact that many local companies continue to be the engine of economic growth that has been driving the region's economic prosperity for more than a decade.

PwC gathered data from 1,330 interviews with executives from 50 countries in the last quarter of 2007. The survey gives a timely and insightful picture of current attitudes, perceptions and responsiveness of major business leaders around the world.

The optimism in Asia Pacific is not the same for CEOs globally whose confidence level has declined for the first time since the 2003 survey. Fifty percent said to 2007 that they were "very confident" about revenue growth over the next 12 months compared to 32 percent who stated such in 2006.

An important observation is the wide disparity in confidence levels of CEOs between mature and emerging economies. The global drop in business confidence was most pronounced in North America (35 percent said they were "very confident" about growth, compared to 56 percent in 2006) and Europe (no more than a third) and Western Europe declined to 44 percent, down by 8 percent). In contrast, CEO confidence in the surging economies of Asia Pacific, Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe each increased to above 55 percent. It is reportedly strong in China and India (73 percent and 90 percent of CEOs, respectively).

Such a global split in confidence levels suggests that the next 12 months should give valuable indication of the rate at which the global economy can continue to expand, despite falling confidence levels in the West. This is a particularly pertinent question, given current volatile global economic conditions caused by fears of a US recession.

People–the key ingredient

Irrespective of business models adopted in response to ongoing global change, the test for talent remains a key concern among CEOs worldwide, ranking second only to a potential economic downturn as the biggest threat to business growth. Asian CEOs (94 percent) believe that people agenda is a top priority in achieving success, but it is difficult to find people with the right combination of technical and commercial skills. CEOs also point to shortcomings in middle and senior management, and organizational barriers, when managing change.

Collaborative networks

Besides knowing the CEOs' views on business confidence and people issues, the survey explores how they balance risks and opportunities of competing and collaborating in the face of enormous uncertainty and change—from the theme "how to succeed in a connected world." The findings indicate that setting up collaborative networks is now a priority response to today's environment, and that CEOs believe its benefits clearly outweigh the risks.

Collaborative networks—groups of suppliers, customers, distributors, partners, regulators and other bodies which come together in an open community of equals to conduct transactions—have gained global acceptance. Most companies, though, have yet to develop a systematic method of capitalizing on them.

Globally, over half of the CEOs agree that collaborative networks will be a defining organizational principle for business. Only 17 percent "agree" or "agree strongly" that costs and risks of networks currently outweigh the benefits. Nevertheless, 37 percent still regard establishing networks as a secondary activity, suggesting that they have yet to exploit the full potential of collaboration. Taken together, these findings suggest that CEOs believe collaboration and open business models merit serious attention, but this does not mean they feel confident about how to leverage them effectively.

Up Inward: Connect and succeed

Overall, perhaps the most pervasive theme of this year's survey is the tension between collaboration and collective action on one hand, and competition and individualism on the other. The connected world is still largely an uncharted territory and many of the changes currently taking place are just the early refinements of traditional business practices.

Isla Lipana & Co., PwC Philippines chair & senior partner Tanny Lipana concludes, "Given this groundbreaking trend, the next decade could well prove to be an extraordinary era for business and society—a period in which companies and governments work together to produce an environment capable of supporting wealth creation and social cohesion around the globe. Put simply, the world is connected as never before. And to the year's Global CEO survey shows, the full power of collaboration is now beginning to emerge."

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The success story of Philamlife–Part II

THE DRAMATIC 1980S SAW THE MERGERS of Philamlife's third chief executive officer, Rodrigo "Ding" de los Reyes, Jr. protégé of '60s Earl Carroll, '80s de los Reyes focused on strengthening the company's agency force, "A salesman's salesman" often described how he related to sales agents and leaders. Like Mr. Carroll, Ding de los Reyes relentlessly harangued the country, reforming the sales structure and tirelessly motivating Philamlife's troops. Ordinary workers became extraordinary performers under his tutelage.

While Philamlife's sea rest saw to sell policies subscribers in itself, it never lacked external accolades from the business community. Notable among these were two awards for excellence presented to Philamlife by the Asian Institute of Management, the first one for excellence in financial management and the second for excellence in general management. Under de los Reyes, no regard these awards for the company, he declined, "We did well when no one was watching. Now we will have to do even better".

With these legacies from my predecessors, the foundation for my own stewardship of Philamlife was already firmly in place when I came in. Cognizant of the public's expectations that I would follow in my father's footsteps, I focused on this monumental challenge. I likened myself to an orchestra conductor enabling Philamlife to continue making beautiful music by ably directing the many talented people we already had. With such a wealth of dedication and experience to count on, my principal task throughout my years here was to challenge my team to push even further together, to attain higher and tougher standards of service, whether in sales, operations or investments. In this regard, I have been constantly blessed by the unflinching response of Philamlifers everywhere to rise to those occasions.

Resetting the vision

Mr. Carroll defined the enduring objective of Philamlife, 99; Zubaida and Mr. de los Reyes brought experience to their respective areas of specialization. Many of her partners, particularly in our agency force, contributed invaluably to the company's growth and continued success. My job was to further sustain Philamlife's spirit and propagate our corporate culture to a new generation. Early on, I outlined our company had on such a formal vision and mission statement in the light of what we had become through many years of formation and change. In addition, but needed to articulate our core values and operating values. With the help of my management team we did exactly that. Philamlife's vision statement today declares our aspiration to always be the leader of our industry, to provide the most comprehensive portfolio of insurance products and personal financial services, and to consistently outperform others in creating the quality of life of every Filipino. Toward these ends our mission is to provide the best service possible to our clients and all other stakeholders by harnessing technology to do more while remaining highly efficient and cost-effective, and with the welfare of our people uppermost in our interests. We further spelled out as abiding by our values the ideal corporate values of excellence, integrity, teamwork, concern for people, and customer orientation.

Broadening our services

The decade of the 1990s was characterized by the liberalization of the insurance sector, which brought many foreign insurers in our shores. This ushered Philamlife into a new era of globalization during which our insurance arm, with our parent company, American International Group (AIG), not only brought us direct together but exposed us to higher international performance standards and expectations. To sharpen Philamlife's competitive stance, I focused on our enterprise vision. We broadened our involvement beyond insurance, pre-need and health care and diversified our business lines to include mutual fund investments, banking and credit card services. Information technology systems, call center telemarketing, property development, investment management, bancassurance and business process outsourcing. We pioneered a high level of synergy among our various companies, and cross-selling was woven into the fabric of our activities. I also became keenly interested in uniting Philamlife's marketing effectiveness. As a result, we fostered new cooperative agreements such as the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and the Filipino-Chinese communities. While Philamlife was a company that catered to all Filipinos, we might ourselves to be more perceptive of the different needs and priorities of specialized groups. We reached out to our countrymen here and abroad, seamlessly penetrating the mainstream of financial preparedness through insurance and other allied programs. As a result of all these, the Philam Group of Companies stood out in the community, and continued to enjoy high public confidence. A 2006 nationwide survey conducted by a third party research firm found that 65 percent of the people surveyed were interested in buy life insurance in the near future indicated Philamlife as their preferred provider. This finding was remarkable because it indicated a higher level of patronage we ourselves were not conscious of. Of course, it made me and my management team even more aware that we had a lot more to do. For all the good that this favorable feedback did to our corporate self-esteem, the more I realized we needed to safeguard our company against reputational risk. Hence, we resolved never to consider any good name by doing anything that would bring us short term gain but long term ruin. In the possibility of long term claims, these we succeeded? Truthfully there is no finish line for this particular task. I can only tell you that we believe we are adhering to this commitment in person, and we are reassuring in our conviction to continue having an untarnished reputation in the future. Bolstering this self-assessment at this time is the fact that our company has received, for two years in a row now, the Platinum Award (which is the highest category in this particular honor circle) for the most trusted brand from the Reader's Digest organization, based on their annual consumer surveys. No other insurance company or financial institution has been bestowed this recognition placement more so. Once again, this recognition fills us of us in the Philam family with great joy, but, at the same time, we remain constantly aware that such such recognition raises the greater challenge to maintain our honor and associations at all times.

Management development

Philamlife's leaders always focused on getting the best talents for all levels of the organization. Training and education are given outstanding emphasis and all employees are encouraged to enroll in courses that would enhance their knowledge of the business. In 2004, Philamlife was recognized by the Life Office Management Association (Loma), an international insurance and financial services organization based in Atlanta, Georgia, as the first life insurance company worldwide to receive an Excellence in Education Award for 10 consecutive years. Not stopping there, we received it an 11th consecutive award last year, too. In 2005, I initiated a Management Associate Program that provides a comprehensive one-year training for college graduates with outstanding scholastic records to fast-track their managerial development. This program has been one of our most successful management development initiatives to date. All and has been recognized for the strengthening of the officers corps of Philamlife. I daresay that Philamlife has the strongest bench of insurance professionals in the industry, evidenced by the fact that we have become the reluctant source of management talent to many of our competitors.

Corporate social responsibility

Let me add two final things integral to understanding and appreciating Philamlife's culture. The first is corporate social responsibility. During the company's 30th anniversary in 1997 we established the Philam Foundation in order to harness the resources of the Philam Group to make a difference to the areas of health care, education, arts and culture, and livelihood development. Since then we have embarked on a number of CSR programs such as the establishment of two Philam-Gawad Kalinga Villages wherein we have evacuated 300 homes in each village in Bataan, Mindoro, and Subic Bay, Zambales, and with the support of AIG Foundation, built another 300 homes in Southern Leyte for the victims of the single landslide some years ago. Last year, during our 80th anniversary, we partnered with the American Chamber of Commerce and an esteemed Universities in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao to provide an English Proficiency Program for 600 students and 6,000 students to enhance their level of English proficiency in order to give them better employment opportunities in the future. But I must admit that our contributions are still modest compared to the great need that exists in our country for meaningful social initiatives. We will continue to challenge ourselves to promote corporate social responsibility and program to further increase our contributions.

The second is work-life balance. I am constantly championing this practice in our organization. Philamlifers are extremely hard workers. We can be so focused on our company work in the pursuit of everything else, but what good is all our business success if the price we pay is alienation from our families or communities? We must seek a balance between our personal as well as professional lives. It is part of our culture of closeness to know each others' families, to feel the joy people others share or

CLOSER with grandson Jenks Cruz

15 yrs after leaving ...

From page B1-1

he works with.

Returning to the Philamlife chief, he dubbed "yes men" and encourages his subordinates to always challenge accepted ideas...as long as they've done their homework to back up their stands.

"I want them to speak out," he says. "As long as they've studied their position, but they shouldn't speak out without analyzing their position."

"I want people to use their heads," he adds, "because I don't want a monopoly of wisdom."

In 15 years after he could have received the highest honor bestowed on business leaders, Cesar finally received the coveted award—a vindication of sorts, despite all the loudness he has ruffled.

"A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches," Cesar quotes from the Book of Proverbs in his acceptance speech.

Indeed, he has lived it, paid for he living it, and has finally been rewarded for it.

Yahoo! places big bet on online advertising

By Dawn L. Lucas

ACCORDING TO INDUSTRY EXPERTS, the local advertising business will continue growing this year just slightly behind the curve, all spurred by ad spending throughout the Asia Pacific.

For newbies in this growth story smiling—and more importantly—than in the realm of online advertising where the country lags far behind its regional peers in terms of total dollars spent.

According to the latest study of the Association of Accredited Advertising Agencies of the Philippines (4As), the total value of the local ad industry stood at $1.08 billion as of the last count.

Of this amount, only an estimated 0.2 percent was spent on online advertising.

The statistic sharply with the level seen in highly developed markets like Singapore where 7 percent of ad spending went to online and outdoor advertising, with the former taking a significant share of that pie.

But it is precisely the Philippines' latent as a largely untapped and underdeveloped market—and its potential—for online advertising that has caught the attention of Internet giant Yahoo!.

Last week, the US-based Internet pioneer said it would open a Philippine unit which would allow it to be better positioned to profit from "the clear upward" in local online advertising as well as to help develop the market, at the same time.

"The potential we are here is [tremendous]," said Yahoo! strategic consultant Cito Cruz-Espejon, who will help run the company's local operations until it recruits its own Philippine.

Cruz-Espejon explained that the local online advertising business, though substantially smaller at present, stands to grow by leaps and bounds especially as more Filipinos get their first Internet experience and go online each year.

"We are seeing local Internet penetration grow by 30 percent every year," he said. "Already there are over 20 percent of Filipinos online. That presents significant potential for us."

Given the mixed fortunes Yahoo! is experiencing abroad, it is making a big bet on the Philippines. Yahoo! occupies what the company boldly describes as a dominant 45-percent market share, in a large degree due to the popularity of its Yahoo! Messenger online chat tool.

Then, for the near- to medium-term future, the Philippine strategy for the Philippines would be based on three big multi-year objectives: to make Yahoo! the starting point for the most consumers; become the "must buy" for the most advertisers; and be a "partner of choice" by delivering industry-leading platforms for the most publishers and developers.

"[We] will add value to the Internet ecosystem in the Philippines by providing users, advertisers, publishers and developers to create indispensable Internet experiences," Abenaroya said.

On top of that, however, the company also wants to gain a significant position of the advertising pie—by positioning itself as an indispensable advertising medium—and thus helping grow the pie further.

The Yahoo! executive explained that they want to ensure that the most effective and easiest marketing solutions are provided to advertisers in the Philippines, including the large brands and the small enterprises.

Finally, the company wants to be a "partner of choice" by delivering industry-leading platforms for most publishers and developers.

To enable developers to maximize of its assets—in technology platforms and data infrastructure—Yahoo! will actively nurturing platforms that are open and flexible to attract the most publishers and developers, the company said in a statement.

"[Our] goal will be to create a motivated community of developers all building industry-unifying applications that will leave it the Internet ecosystem and provide services to a vast array of highly personalized and relevant entries to those from," it added.

Indeed, it is a big bet for a big company by a relatively small nation, but local Yahoo! chief Abenaroya has big hopes for the country.

"We believe the online business in this market has a lot of room to grow, and that is our goal to be the leader of our region all power," he said.

FEATURES IN BRIEF

AGETTP Awardees (top) Tanel Awal receiving the Department of Tourism and Ezra RSCG 4D Manila's "The Philippines Explore, Experience, Return, Campaign," Sen. Richard Gordon and Bale Gov. Ambassador Tanz "Walls of Hope," Rommel Jose's "Bandet Foundation (Bahay) Program" and four projects of Philippine Shell Petroleum Corporation. Photo shows Ezra RSCG 4D Manila managing director and chief creative officer Herman Agenap, AAI managing director Audrey General and AAI CEO Charlie Agatep

THE PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Co. won the Amil Award of Excellence for the PLDT 2006 Annual Report during the 43rd Amil Awards recently. Accepting the awards are PLDT and Smart public affairs head Ramon R. Isberto (2nd from right) and PLDT media senior manager Horacio B. Lontoc (right). With them are awards committee chair Jude Bridal-Solomon and board of juror's member Dr. Jaime S. Dy; and media team member Anthony D. Abcantara.

Bayer launches new insect killer

BAYER RECENTLY LAUNCHED a NEW INSECT KILLER—THE BAYER Advanced Multiple Multi-Insect Killer.

The new product was developed by the Bayer Environmental Science Team. It uses an advanced oil-based formulation that works just as effectively as kerosene-based insect killing products, but does not leave any irritating odor after its application.

Bayer consumers consider the strong and scented smell that other insect killing products leave for effectiveness. But why suffer from the smell for hours or even days as said when you can get the same results with a product that doesn't leave a bothersome odor?

Second, laboratory test results show that the new insect killer has a 100-percent knockdown rate for mosquitoes, flies and cockroaches.

The insect killer is available in supermarkets and groceries nationwide in 300 ml, 500 ml and 600 ml sizes. For questions, call hotline no. 721-8822 or send e-mail to sales-support@bayercs.com.ph.

Most affordable way to call and text

TWO-COMBO combo a better than your usual burger and fries. And it costs even less than a set of your favorite food.

Sun Cellular has a new prepaid product—P10 Call and Text Combo.

The service gives you 10 minutes of Sun-to-Sun calls, 40 Sun-to-Sun texts and 10 take-anywhere texts for only P10. The set value has a 10-minute Sun-to-Sun call feature added to the offer—good for instances when a voice call is urgently needed.

The Sun Cellular's P10 Call and Text Combo is now available at all Sun Shops and authorized retail outlets nationwide.

Stay in set to spend another P11 billion in 2008 to add more cell sites and boost network coverage.

AIM turns Ruby; grand celebration set

IN CELEBRATION OF THE ASIAN Institute of Management's (AIM) 40th foundation year, there will be a grand alumni homecoming dubbed Amici High at Sonz High on Friday, March 7, 2008, 6 p.m. at the Bonifacio High Street, Bonifacio Global City in Taguig City.

The grand homecoming brings together a spectacular collection of AIM graduates including top executives, successful businessmen and captains of industry flying in from around the world for a chance to meet, network and party on the eve of AIM's 40th anniversary.

Leading the Asian-inspired chillout party and breakout activities is four class MBA 2000 and Smart Infinity Music Superstars are Paul Bonifacio Dr. sculpture Corp. (TBOC) and darla Land Inc.

For more details, please contact the AIM alumni office at 892-4011.

Mapping the future

From page B2-1

their loved ones are in pain for instance, outcasted neighbors, worried about the plight of some of our colleagues who are affiliated with major illnesses, voluntarily organized fund-raising activities for them. Still others made out to children scattered in the Philippine General Hospital each Christmas time to give them joy by sharing a toy. These are humble but dear manifestations that we are endeavoring to keep people in the center of our hearts, and not just focusing on work as the main total of our existence. Work life balance: I believe we are getting there in Philamlife.

Closing remarks

Summing up all these thoughts and sentiments, I go back to the most essential element that drives Philamlife's purpose and accomplishments—and that is our dedicated people. I'm confident that truly like a human face, a business that recognizes the value of serving others, where making a difference is not a slogan but an everyday endeavor. Ladies and gentlemen of the Management Association of the Philippines, the honor you have given to me today is not for me alone. For myself, I share this with all the men and women of my dynamic organization, Philamlife in particular and the Pelican Group of Companies in general. In honoring me you have recognized all of us, and for this we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

With all these said, my penultimate words of appreciation tonight go to my wife, Vicky, and our daughters, Ina, Jessica, Nona, Jessica and Joanne, for their wholehearted support, sacrifice, understanding and commitment. They have been my inspiration, my strength, light and inspiration. My entire career it is for them that I have endured all the burdens of my work. They are, and will always be, the purpose of my life. Recently, my family life has gotten greater meaning with the addition of my grandson, Jethro Cruz, and my son-in-law, Atnath.

Finally and most of all, I humbly thank this almighty for this blessing because it is entirely His grace that I stand before you tonight. To Him I offer this prayer.

Once again, I thank the Management Association of the Philippines for this singular honor. Mabuhay and good evening.

(Speech delivered by the author who is president and CEO of Philippine American Life and General Insurance Company during conferment of "MAP Management Man of the Year 2007" Feedback at cmap@philamlife.com.ph)

'Better late than never'

From page B2-4

To its thanks with husband, and daughter-in-law Alessandra.

To a one of the richest men in the Philippines. He is chair of the Metrobank Group, which has interests in banking, real estate and manufacturing.

"I have been blessed with many opportunities to develop my energies and talents in order to build a growing business and a satisfying life," Dy said in his speech. "I have tried my best to give back as much, or even more, than I have been given. I have done this in the two areas in which I have been most involved, banking and philanthropy."

Margie Quiroga-Espiritu

RAMON Sy of Goodyear (left) with the honoree

FORMER Ambassador to the United States Albert del Rosario (left) with banker Edward Go

INQUIRER chair Marixi Prieto (left) with PLDT's Manuel V. Pangilinan and Inquirer president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez

CONSUMER Watch's Raul T. Concepcion (left) with former BSP Governor Gabriel C. Singson

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B2 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER MONDAY, MARCH 5, 2007
BUSINESS Monday

'Better late than never'

INQUIRER fêtes MAP Man of the Year for 2006

THE COCKTAIL PARTY FOR the honoree came a year late.

Sejun George SR Ty apologized that the cocktail party in his honor was delayed for a month. But tomorrow reminded him it was delayed for a year!

But at over 70 and supposedly retired, Ty remains a very busy man, shuttling between Shanghai and Manila.

The Philippine Daily Inquirer has a tradition of holding a weekend party for the Management Man of the Year (MMY) awardee. Ty was the man for 2006.

But as they say "better late than never."

So last Wednesday, a small group of MAP members graced the occasion.

The group included MAP former president Alberto del Rosario (the new president Ed Chua was out of the country), PLDT chair Manuel V. Pangilinan who arrived late, former Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Gabriel C. Singson, Bloomberry Board member Jose Raul Bonoan, Smart Communications Co. president Napoleon Nazareno, Ramon Ang of Goodman, among others.

It was a rare occasion to see George Ty with his family, which included wife Mary, sons Arthur and Alfred, daughters Zandra, Margaret Ty-Chan with husband, Alejandro Ty and Augusto Ty-Dy Buncio.

2006 MAP Management Man of the Year, George Ty, with his family and Inquirer executives.

HAPPY FAMILY (From left) MARGARET Ty-Chan, Zandra Ty, Mary Ty, Alejandro Ty and Augusto Ty-Dy Buncio

UCCBCCM-Kasilag and PPO Music director Harold Gabaog

LIFESTYLE

At 93, Kasilag has a new opera, and it's environmental in theme

PPO's Nicole Cordero

Tita King's 'indomitable spirit'

By Amanda Mia Guerrero
Correspondent

NATIONAL ARTIST for music Lucrecia R. Kasilag ("Tita King" to all) is 93, true. By friend, partially deaf, wheelchair-bound and with impaired speech.

She has been in this condition for the past four years, and is no longer seen in the cultural scenes she once frequented. Sometimes people ask if she is still around.

Well, Tita King is very much around in spirit, in strength of spirit. I mean, in fact, last year she was able to compose a new orchestral opera, "Why Flowers Bloom in May," with the collaboration of librettist-scenarist Fides Cuyugan-Asensio, dean Harold Gabaog of the Philippine Women's University School of Music, pianist Diana Reyes-Lomido, and the composer's faithful assistant, Juliet and Marian.

The latter two interpreted for the sisters the sounds—the notes—emanating from Tita King's throat. It was an epic struggle possibly for every sound he/she all concerned.

"All the notes were in place," Gabaog declared during a recent press conference at the Mabuti Skyline Suites at the Diliff Trade Center, Pasay City. "Her mind is still intact. I think the Holy Spirit guided us."

"The music is totally hers," said Asensio. "She did 18 songs, with 80 percent new material and the rest connecting bridges from her old works."

They brought along videos in CD-format to and used Tita King's piano at her residence. They

MARIAN Cuyugan at Reyes Rivera

wrote down the notes they got from her, and discussed the instrumentation with the composer.

Asensio would read the lyrics she wrote, and Tita King would say the syllables.

Caught on video

It wasn't easy. "Sometimes's coming out, what she is saying?" the soprano would turn to the nurse (helpers).

"Oh it's in, oh it's not. I would tell her, 'Tita King this is too high.' I would go on octave higher, and turn enough she wanted it very high. David would play the notes on the piano. It was blood, sweat and tears, a labor of love. It may be the last legacy of Tita King."

The whole process was caught on video, and this would make for a very interesting documentary for music students in particular and music lovers in general.

"It's a tribute to Tita King's indomitable spirit," said director Henry Ilejay.

The press conference was called to announce that the fifty opera, "Why Flowers Bloom in May," will be staged at the Cultural Center of the Philippines March 8, 9 p.m., and March 9, 3 p.m.

Based on a legend, it is the story of a lass King (alternating voices Dindi Gay and Sherwin Ivanez), a beautiful earth girl (soprano Asensio Tiffany) (Mac the Moon (soprano Nicole Laurel Antonio) — perhaps (alto Gloria (Marian Cuyugan) sensuous, turbulent flowers and a dance-drive.

Prima ballerina Lisa Macuja plays the assistive-dancer. Choreography is by Onie Barrera.

"What you will see on the stage is the vision ... the collaboration," said Ilejay.

"It is a new thing, more than the usual singing and acting. There are two levels of theatre and dance—the legend, and the story as it comes out in dance and narration. The characters are symbols of concepts, not human beings), and they become a metaphor."

LISA Macuja-Elizalde

MIGUEL Jose Bernas

M-GAGE

True to the message of Dean Raul Santos of the UST Conservatory of Music, the 'Tribute to the Thurmonites' concert was a balm to the tired spirit

Kiddie ensemble to play in NY

By Antonio C. Hila

THE PHILIPPINE YOUTH ENSEMBLE International Ensemble (PHIE), composed of 10 children aged 4 to 6 years old who are students of Philippine Montessori Center in 27 Quezon-Ilo, White Plains Subdivision in Quezon City, is slated to perform at Queens Theatre in the Park and at the Polish House of the Steinhauer Outer Bridge Crossing Park in New York on April 18 and 19, respectively.

The performance is made possible through the invitation extended to the Children's Orchestra Society (COS) through its president, Michael Jinlap, who was impressed by the ensemble's striking musicality in a performance at the Ayala Museum Function Symphonic Ensemble, composed of students ages 12-18, will perform with PHIE.

Hearing the children rehearse for one hour on a lunch break recently was a treat. Three playing simply ecstatic as they tackled classical, Philippine and Broadway pieces.

It was with disbelief that I watched with piano toddlers doing ensemble work as naturally, unguided and with an affectation as all once for their striking rapport with each other.

They barely read music but were quick to be taught by ears. They naturally had a fantastic aural capability to absorb musical ideas, and one of their mentors, Lois Espinosa.

All the other music mentors were assured to ensure an absolutely professional. Music Orchestra S. Talwatta gave assistance at the piano, and the non—Lois M. Soriano, Cecile F. Jalcedo, Ester Lee H. Paragas and Imelda Tom-Cynthia—took turns supervising the children.

Music has become an active component of the learning process in the school, and it has yielded remarkable results, said Bernadette F. Wenbol, the school director.

Through the ensemble, the kids have developed focus, confidence and a sense of responsibility and discipline. This translates into good performance in their academic subjects, apart from instilling in them a strong spirit of camaraderie and teamwork.

Their energy was apparent as they played the overture from "Carmen" by Bizet, a medley from Tchaikovsky's "Sleeping Beauty," and Khachaturian's "Waltz from Gayneh's "Ballet," after which they played with coordinated, concentrated movements, from Rodgers and Hammerstein's "The Sound of Music."

From one piece to the next, they changed positions and played different instruments such as the marimba, xylophone, metallophone, glockenspiel, sticking, tick-tock, chimes. Performing without the benefit of a conductor, the ensemble relies on a collective sense of rhythm and musicality.

The ensemble includes Jose Bonifacio Jaymee Angeles, Illana Riana Faustino Angeles, Arcene Maria Apostol, Aprille Nikko Delfino, Florencia Jose Flores, Elizabeth Bagot, Nikki Lasala, Lucia Sabrina Llanera, Francesca Lao Crespigo, Joy Alfred Perugos, Vincent Philip Paragas, Shannon Isabel Ho, Jeanne Axel Bay Cruz Fe Antonia Severin Reyes, Kaitlin Renee Rookes and Marcus Christian Tan.

Tribute concert

The UST Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of Prof. Reynaldo Fonacier, took center stage in this year's "Tribute to the Thurmonites," an annual concert held to honor the administration, faculty, students and alumni of the University of Sto. Tomas.

The orchestra has quite a reputation as a successful stage platform for the school's production of the Tristan operetta's "The Flower Drum."

The night of admiration and enjoyment allowed the audience to enjoy the musical versatility of the orchestra, and the students and alumni who made it.

Bianca Labrador and Bo Bo Yee, and professors Julie Ann Mallapre and Cristian Pablo Manuel.

The opening number, Rossi's Symphony No. 1 in C and Procaccini, revealed the might of the symphony's brass section as it played the piece superbly. The ensemble was inspired and undaunted, bringing out the piece's majesty.

Next came the string section, which played Meyer's Baden para Orquestra with scrupulous grace, with the soloists scholarship) weaving their parts in their introduced the theme.

The fun part came in the rendition of the familiar "Carnival of Animals," as the two pianists took turns entering Saint-Saëns' music. The presentation came complete with slide projections and narration by Inés Rosca III.

The pianists, however, were Bach-arranged's Symphony No. 2, Op. 27, in E Minor. The arranger showed much promise. The orchestra showed much flair in the adagio movement, dishing out the familiar theme that Tim Pan Alley later transformed into popular duets, "If I Could Love Again."

Here, Ramos conducted from the heart, turning over his eyes from the score and instead having the musicians squarely in his fingertips (super) with flexes and down-and brilliant symphonic timbre from their playing.

True to the message of Raul Santos, dean of the UST Conservatory of Music, the concert was, all in all, a balm to the tired spirit.

Dulaang UP's 'Orosman at Zafira' extended

DULAANG UP'S ACCLAIMED CONTEMPORARY production of Francisco Balagtas's formidable "Orosman at Zafira," directed and choreographed by Rowen Santos, is extended for three more days.

The additional shows will be on March 6-8, 7 p.m., at WHERE Mo. Guerrero Theater, Palma Hall, UP Diliman.

"Orosman at Zafira" stars Cris Villonco, Mishi Power, Arnold Reyes, Tribo Reyes, Ron Andal Jarina, Bowley Lumasag, Ruby Ilo, Lee Marcos, Bird Concepcion, Tau Reno, Sarasino Cabrera. Production design by Tange Barcenas; musical direction and original score by Carol Bella Dead vocalist of famed neo-ethnic group Pinikpikan; lighting design by John Bonilla; and dramaturgy and additional script by Jun Sabayton.

The show is presented as part of Bonifacio Fire ex-2008, in celebration of the UP Centennial.

Tickets are only P250. Discounts will be given to El students who buy in advance at the Dulaang UP office.

Call Samantha Claris at 0915-6276866 or call the DUP office at 921-5349 for tickets.

JETT Pangan and Ricky Davao in the drama about Emilio Jacinto

Tanghalang Pilipino's rock musical 'EJ' on its last weekend

THE ROCK MUSICAL "EJ: ANG PINAG-kaisang Bituin sina Emilio Jacinto at Edgar Allan Poe" is ongoing at Tanghalang Huseng Batutian (Little Theater), Cultural Center of the Philippines, until March 9.

Written by Fidanza Bell of Bituin Ed Marasigan with songs and music by The Jesters, "EJ" stars Ricky Davao as Emilio Jacinto and Jett Pangan as Edgar "Edgar" Poe-jacinto, two guys who cracked it before during the turbulent years of the Marcos regime.

Described by its director, Chris Millado, as a "rock memorabilia," "EJ" cut into the beginnings of social consciousness in the souls lives of Emilio and Edgar, in their contrasting responses to the social ills in Philippine society, and their eventual violent deaths.

Edgar shared into the headliners as guest artist of the National Union of Students of the Philippines in the time when martial law was declared. Emilio is best known as the commanding generation of the generation of the Katipunan who helped to be co-opted by the ruling party-and its minions.

Through Emilio and Edgar never met in real life, "EJ" puts them here to have in an imagined debate, with Emilio taking the side of pedestalled and enlightened revolutionist politics as the war loomed for the country, and Edgar believing in violent struggle due to the hollowness of reforms in the political culture and class structure of Philippine society.

The Jesters, one of the most enduring bands in the country, provides the musical component of "EJ." Aside from hearing original music composed specifically for the play, audiences can look forward to some of the band's more popular tunes, including "Talaga Hanna," "Mula Sa Alam Kiya," "Hiwa Kamay," "Dreams" and other favorites. The band will perform live in selected performances.

Others in the cast are Becky Wan, Jolina Dimakuta, Bodie Cadness, Tess Cadness, Bhyan Encinas, Mitch Bagtas, Boy Cabrera, Ina Cabrera and the Tanghalang Pilipino Actors Company.

Performances are at 8 p.m., Friday, Saturday and 3 p.m. matinee, Saturday-Sunday.

Tickets at P300 and P400 are available at the Tanghalang Pilipino (8521361), CCP Box Office (8323706) and Ticketworld (8919999). Visit www.tanghalang-pilipino.com, e-mail ccptanghalan@yahoo.com.

Rep's 'Romance in D' ongoing

MEN ABOVE THE HUSBO FILLED dreams of Orange, music-obsessed Charles Boston also alone in his apartment with only the company of his greatest friend—his music.

Meanwhile, next door, poor and work-until-listed Ivy moves in after muddling through a painful divorce. As only fate would have it, these two lonesome souls meet in an unusual turn of events, sparking a heartwarming friendship that blends together the worlds of language and music.

These are the lonesomeness Charles Boston, the charismatic George Sax, and Isabel's vivacious mother Helen, and when fell, have in an endearing story of navigating the path to love in only Jenne Barranti's "Romance in D" once more.

Director Miguel Sarmiento, a highly respected actor and cast director in Philippine theatre, is no stranger to the work of playwright Jenne Barranti. In the past, Sarmiento has his directorial vision to another well-known Barranti romance, the gender-bender "Mr. Mrs."

In "Romance in D," theatre luminary Audie Gemora plays man-of-age Charles Boston. Tess Cabrera's return to the commercial genre after playing title roles in musical "Mame" and "The Sound of Music."

Playing opposite Sarmiento is Ana Abad Santos-Zuñeg as Isabel Poe-Jacinto once again with Bert on stage in an area after directing a critically acclaimed re-imagination of "Hamlet."

Rounding out the cast are theatre veterans Pinky Bautista and Glaiggay Alonso, as Helen Boston and George Sax.

"Romance in D" marks Alonso's highly anticipated return to the Rep stage after her unforgettable portrayal of King Arthur in "Camelot" in 1994.

"Romance in D" runs until March 30 at Onstage Theater in Greenhills One, with performances Friday-Saturday, 8 p.m., and Saturday-Sunday matinees at 3:30 p.m.

Tickets are at P550, P500 and P200. For tickets, reservations and information, call 8870718 or Ticketworld at 8919999. Tickets are also available at the Rep office at 2316 Pasong Tamo Ext., Makati, and at the gate before every performances.

Young musicians to shine in piano festival

MUSIC LOVERS ARE IN FOR A number of musical delight when the Piano Teachers' Guild of the Philippines and Philamlife present the annual piano festival at the Philamlife Auditorium, March 2, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. The marathon concert is open to the public.

Dubbed "Pasko ng Musikang Pilipino," the 10th piano festival will feature 200 young piano maestros who passed auditions held at the University of the Philippines College of Music, the University of Santo Tomas Conservatory of Music, St. Scholastica's College of Music, the Adventist University of the Philippines and Greenhills Music Studio. Also participating are 30 piano teachers.

"We are happy to note that the festival has grown from more than a hundred participants in its early '80s to over 200 this year. The participants are winners of the Regional Music Competition for Young Artists (Manyan) and past PTGP competitions," PTGP festival chair Audrey V. Jose said.

Steven Eliot Muller (Category C/Third prize winner of the PTGP 2005 Season and Sweating Competition, Category C Prize Winner of the 2007 PTGP Philamlife Rich Competition, and Category C second prize winner of the recently concluded Manyan) will perform a two-piano ensemble with Chantee Dandan (also a prize winner of the PTGP-Philamlife 2007 Rich Competition). "Dance Macabre" by Saint-Saens-Franz Liszt.

Joining the roster of performers is another achiever, 11-year-old Denise Ruth L. Jose, who will render Franz Schubert's Impromptu in A-Flat Major, Op. 90, No. 4.

Jose won Category A1 second prize winner of the 2004 Manyan, Category A2 second prize winner of the PTGP 2005 Season and Satellite Competition, and Category A2 second prize winner of the PTGP-Philamlife 2007 Rich Competition.

Felix Mendelssohn's Rondo Capriccioso, Op. 14, will be played by Francis Lorenzo Lontoyg, a two-time PTGP Competition prize winner.

Hannah Lyn B. Tan (Cat. A2 second prize winner of the 2006 Manyan and Cat. B first prize winner of the recently concluded PTGP-Philamlife Rich Competition) will play Schwee No. 2 by Frederich Chopin.

Pieces by famous Filipino artists Francisco Santiago, Felipe de Leon, Lucio San Pedro, Antonio Molina, Lucino Sacramento, as well as concertos, will also be played in the festival.

Call audience Sets at 7410401, 8917-8144570.

Auditions for Stages' 'West Side Story'

STAGES, THE THEATER COMPANY that staged "High School Musical" in 2007 starring Sam Concepcion and directed by Audie Gemora, is recasting the classic Broadway musical "West Side Story" at the Meralco Theater in September-October.

The musical will star Christen Reutens in the role of Tony.

Auditions will be held for the roles of Maria, Bernardo, Riff, Anita, and a strong ensemble of dancers on March 29-30, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., at Stanz Studio, Brixton Bldg., 172 Malates St., Addition Hills, San Juan.

Singers and dancers must be 17-30 years old. Bring 10 colored photo, resumé and video on CD. Call 8301111 loc. 225.

Child Development Expert Encourages Parents to Expose, Explore, Experience

Dr. Gilbert Sandoval

Three Areas of Development

"[C]hildhood learning skills such as math only reflect cognitive ability which is just one aspect of a child's total development. A child has three domains of development – physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional. The goal of education, at home and in school, should be to nourish, nurture and develop all three. This is where exposure, exploration and experience come in.

Expose

Discovery is part of your child's learning process, so expose your eye-cuddler to a variety of materials and activities that can stimulate his body, mind and feelings. This entails providing him with a safe yet stimulating environment so that you can confidently watch over him from a distance.

Provide him with age-appropriate toys and materials rich in texture and color. Not only will this help to motivate your child to explore these toys, he will also learn concepts such as shape, size and number. Better yet, involve a child of similar age to play along with him so he can learn social skills such as sharing and waiting for his turn.

Explore

Pre-school children are capable of running and jumping but still need wide-exploration free motor skills. Encourage your child to take part in free play that makes use of sand, water, hard pieces and play dough to get his finger muscles working. As he explores with these materials, don't tell him what to do. You will be surprised to discover how creative he is.

Outside of the home, there are other child-friendly venues where he can also explore and learn – a children's museum, a kiddie park, or a nature site. And while taking trips allow your child to scrutinize new information very well. Aside from this, he gets to meet people from all walks of life and become aware of the larger society of which he is a part.

Experience

Learning doesn't take place only in the classroom, so allow your child to play in different environments – the sandbox, the beach, or the garden. Encourage him to work with his hands and discover for himself the concepts of hot and cold, wet and dry, rough and smooth. And by utilizing his living thing, a few kids as well. Your child will not only enjoy these but learn valuable lessons such as cooperation and empathy – skills that he will need in order to make and maintain friendships.

Expose your kids to a safe, healthy and stimulating environment so they can explore freely and experience the world around him. Let them be discovered.

Let him grow. Let him go.

Dr. Gilbert Sandoval is a Professor at the Department of Family Life and Child Development, College of Home Economics, U.P. Diliman. A member of the Filipino Family Life and Child Development Foundation, she is also a well-known author and sought-after speaker on various family life and child development conferences and workshops.

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LIFESTYLE

Convocar's crazy mechanical quilt

The artist reaffirms the romantic spirit

"HUNDLING Horse" I

By Lira B. Zulueta

SALVADOR CONVOCAR COMbines figuration and abstraction with his characteristic bravura in "Characters, Creatures and Critters" March 3-14 at 1/of Gallery, Serendra, Bonifacio Global City (tel. 9813352).

The show exhibits once again Convocar's singular mastery of mixed media. Influenced by Louise Nevelson, Convocar's works are really mixed media-to-convey approximations of the Russian-American's sculptures.

Old like and multilayered, with subforms emerging and overlapping in what appears like a geometrical quilt, Convocar's works are intended for exploration of space and time. They seem a miniature world with its complex of flora and fauna, walls and roofs.

Convocar's works expand the space and are thus considered as compositions. His colors are an industrial wash and a metallic rust, midway between monochrome and polychrome. Nevelson's works call attention to their structure, Convocar's to their "made-up-ness."

But instead of Nevelson's seeming cold detachment, a mask for her intensely Convocar is unflaggingly engaged, almost childlike. His canvases are filled with human figures that are part whimsical, part enigmatic, framed by color washes and an chaic symbols and patterns.

In his new series, the figures have become cartoonish, the colors not so much industrial as pastoral.

The naturalist streak seems evident in

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John Grisham's unusual 'Appeal'

By Ruel S. De Vera

ATTENTION, READERS: PLEASE BE informed that this John Grisham novel actually has lawyers in it. That announcement might sound strange, considering that Grisham, a real-life lawyer, practically turned the courtroom thriller into mainstream multimedia mania with books like "The Firm" and "The Client."

But Grisham had repeatedly tried to see value else he could write. He has recently diversified into nonfiction (the terrific "The Innocent Man"), sports (the eccentric "Playing for Pizza"), and suspense (the perplexing "The Broker").

The last time he dealt with anything vaguely courtroom-colored was the compulsively readable "The Last Juror" in 2004.

In other words, Grisham remains loyal-scented when it comes to legal proceedings in unorthodox ways, so the reprieve here are high and bothsome for his 25 th book, "The Appeal" (Doubleday, New York; 2008; 338 pages).

"Round up the lawyers," orders the judge at the very beginning of "The Appeal," and the lawyers—and readers who love reading about lawyers—come running at once.

After years of limited trial success, the jury had found chemical giant Krane guilty of changing toxic water into the water of Somerton, Mississippi, and awarded $41 million in damages to a widow who had lost her husband and child to cancer due to the contaminated water.

It is proof that Grisham really has mastered the courtroom genre when the verdict, which could easily be the ending of a lesser book, is deployed as the beginning instead.

"The Appeal" is about what comes after, and it is both surprising and not pretty.

The winning small-town legal team, Wes Payton and wife Mary Grace, are relieved to have won, as they are loath to cheat, but they were not ready for just how many dirty appeals process was going to be.

That's because Krane's owners, ruthless billionaire Carl Trudeau, will do anything to win the appeal, and hires a suspicious yet expensive Florida trial-history firm named Troy Phelan.

The group to do just that.

The book will initially feel familiar to long-time Grisham followers because it seems to borrow elements from "Runaway Jury" and "The King of Torts." But to it goes along, what the book recalls more than anything else is a well-written episode from the final season of "The West Wing."

The enigmatic firm's secret plan to reverse the verdict on appeal is devious. How does Supreme Court justice who will do just that.

Thus, the book's second part focuses on the race, what happens in public and, more tellingly, in private as the back-room dealings intensify.

Tellingly, Grisham tells his readers into complacency as he moves what appear to be familiar pieces into place (shadowy company, subtle counsel, moneyed antagonist), only to suddenly change the game.

The book's last portion will shock some readers as Grisham shows his hand, and then abandons some cards completely to wind the end with a genuinely unpredictable ending, a rarity for a Grisham book.

It feels like a recycled chess, triggered by a rather blatant deus ex machina, leading to a conclusion that feels convoluted and confusing.

The interesting aspect is how the book shows that Grisham has mastered many of his trademark skills with lesser (less so-so) books, crafting memorable characters, as well as setting (Mississippi—Grisham's stomping grounds—and other locales) into characters by themselves.

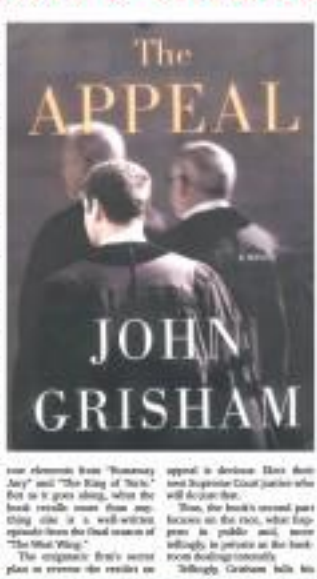
His reader-friendly prose has become even more accessible, with the book, short for a Grisham novel, moving along briskly.

Even with its various contradictions, it represents another step in Grisham's evolution as a novelist. He continues to refine his skills and maneuverings in the legal universe, from witty to boring plot threads and discarded characters, it is hypnotic to its readability.

Grisham has grown active in working with the wrongfully convicted, and it is seen clear he has an issue in this book as well—the danger of judicial elections, his advocacy seeping into his art. "The Appeal" seems to wonder around everything but the aforementioned appeal.

In summation, even with an exciting that will leave many readers cold, the book is a cautionary tale told confidently proof of yet another experiment, with John Grisham putting his considerable talents to work in exploring a point more than in telling a good story.

Available in hardcover from Diamond Book Store



The newest courtroom tale from the author of 'Runaway Jury' is a welcome arrival, even as Grisham puts more effort behind making a point than in telling a good story

Coffee's weave in the national fabric

By Noel Sy-Quia
Contributor

IN AUTHORING "KAPEHAN," I TRAVeled all over the archipelago, and saw coffee in all its social and geographical contexts. I have drunk coffee in many different countries, and have always been struck by how it adapts itself to local environments. The Philippines is no exception.

A serious coffee is like fabric. You can tailor it according to your needs and resources, and for the requirements of the occasion.

After over two and a half centuries in the Philippines, coffee has become ubiquitous in place and time. It is one crucial ingredient for raising it for granted. As with all things, you get out of it what you put into it. A little extra focus and attention brings in even happy rewards.

Coffee stories

It's like realizing that that high-school classmate, remembered as a shy and plain-looking girl, is now a dazzling and pretty college student, or how that boring (and, therefore, invisible) boy in college has grown to become a man of virtue and achievement.

There were many stories, more than the book's pages allowed the inclusion. One friend could not have his interview experience took him deep into the wounds inside.

He stayed with a family of four for a number of days, sleeping on an outdoor bed, when "ancient mosquitoes on steroids" feasted on him at night. The family's meals consisted of rice and the occasion of one tin of corned beef that was made to last several days. With every meal, there was coffee to drink. To this family, coffee was an anchor of dignity.

Another friend shared a family story about a relative who had lived in Manila in the early 1900s.

It was posthumously discovered—after his fanciful wake, more precisely—that he had fathered three illegitimate children. They had been brought to the wake by their mother to pay their respects.

They had never been seen previously by anyone present, but the young children bore an undeniable resemblance to the deceased. A few days of detective work revealed they had been fathered by the cousin of half-Irish-lung coffee tycoon that took place at 11 a.m. every day of the deceased's working week.

In time, they came to be referred to as the Coffee-Break Kids. To their credit, coffee had served as a tool for sentimental procession.

Coffee over dinner

Single women told me how they preferred, when asked out on a first date, to be invited for coffee instead of dinner (possibility without commitment).

Single men confided from an offer of coffee could be made with feigned nonchalance (romantic implications dressed as innocent indifference). Me? Have the hots for you? Hmm.... For single men and women alike, coffee can now be inexpensive romantic fuel.

I came to appreciate how coffee elevates poor and rich alike, is an unquestioning companion to vice and virtue, and an ingredient for building romance or multi-generational family gathering.

Coffee's life

But it was after the book had been printed and while the book launch was in full flow that my parable of my relationship crystallized into a humble appreciation of coffee's own circle of life.

I realized that a cup of coffee began with a decision: a farmer's decision to plant a coffee tree. As with all such decisions, there are serious tradeoffs.

"Why wait a few years before the first harvest of coffee beans, when another crop can provide marketable produce within a few months? What if yields don't work out? What if the weather works against me? What if the market prices drops?"

It is a measure of risk, faith and courage. And when the harvest comes in, producers get to work. Full time on the trading, roasting, packaging and marketing of the finished product.

And so I realized that to drink a cup of coffee was to enable a farmer with a high-school education to send his children to college, it allowed thousands of professionals to make a living and build careers, and to send their children to college. I realized in a cup of coffee there was courage, effort and mutual benefit.

The book project is now over, and I am so much more aware of the purposes of coffee, and its presence everywhere. My journey of discovery has ended for now. I wish you a good start to yours.

Sy-Quia is the author of "Kapehan: A Celebration of Coffee in the Philippines," published by Anvil Books. It is available at Fully Booked, PowerBooks and National Book Store.

AUTHOR Noel Sy-Quia

COFFEE break at Makati's food canteens

Diether Ocampo's foundation receives book donation

NATIONAL BOOK STORE Foundation Inc. (NBSFI), headed by chair Trina Almdingen, donated 500 books in connection with its "Handog Ko, Kids Mo" book drive, in December to the KIDS Foundation of matinee idol Diether Ocampo.

The activity reversed the books during the official turnover time on Feb. 8 at the National Book Store head office in Mandaluyong.

NBSFI raised 12,467 books for over 200 schools and day-care centers nationwide during the annual book-raising campaign that was highlighted by reading sessions with different TV and media personalities like Ai-Ai "Sitter" Perlas, Dawn Zulueta, Marisol Lana, Bobert Alcantara of "The Probe Team" and actress Rozelle.

KIDS Foundation founder Diether Ocampo and National Book Store Foundation chair Trina Almdingen

Writing fellows to 2008 UP workshop named

LIGHAM: THE UP INSTITUTE of Creative Writing (UPICW) has selected 12 fellows to attend the 47th UP National Writers Workshop to be held at the Ignore Lodge in Camp Aguinaldo, Baguio City, April 8-19.

The fellows are: (Fiction in English) Ian Casocot, (Poetry in English) Ana Maria Katigbak, Sinumot Antonio; (Creative Non-Fiction in English) Mica Rodriguez Santos; (Drama in Filipino) Nicolas Pichay Pichay Rodolfo Lana Jr.; (Poetry in Filipino) Roberto Africanero, Frank Cimatu, (Fiction in Filipino) Abdon Balde Jr., Allan Derain.

As in the past two years, the workshop—one of the major national projects and the most prominent outreach program of the UPICW—will engage writers in mid-career who have already published or are about to publish their first books, and who have received previous writing awards and distinctions.

Grantees are required to make a presentation of their respective works-in-progress during the workshop, based on a manuscript to be submitted to the UPICW.

The teaching staff will be composed of UPICW director Ma. E. Nadera, workshop director Jo Barlaan, Cathleen Ann Almario and Alain Pangilo L. Alvarado, National Artist and professor Bienvenido Lumbera, writer-critic professor emeritus Gémino H. Abad, Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo, professor Jun Cruz Reyes, and Charlson Ong.

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Para sa kanya, obvious ba kung ano ang best deal? Bakit ka pa pipili ng iba? *Bida Payless, Get More!*

Saw ka ay sinusuwa sinong nakakakita ng mga kamalas sa mukhan na nagsasabing "Best Value" at "Limited Offer"? Sobra ka bang nasisyahan kapag nakakabasap ng mga nagsasabing bagay sa sabi-"Sale"?

Capturing the market

For as long as she can remember, Kristine Gonzales has always had her hands on a camera. Her family owned a camera shop and her father, wedding photographer Wally Gonzales, were then encouraged her to take up photography. "Since I was a child, my dad has been training me." It's no wonder, that right after she finished college, her dad whisked her into the family business and she eventually found herself managing her own wedding photography company, H+Q Digital Wedding Photography by Wally Gonzales.

H+Q began as a special package of Wally Gonzales Photography for couples who wanted a more affordable but still high quality photos. H+Q photography on their wedding day. More than a year later, with so many clients inquiring about H+Q, it was human nature to separate wedding photography outfit with Kristine mainly behind the lens.

While her father's name and expertise helped H+Q establish itself in the wedding photography business, Kristine knew that the company still needed to be publicized further. "Publicity is very important. We knew we needed more exposure to be recognized, and to get more clients."

As she had always been keen on following her father's footsteps, she took the same advertising route Wally Gonzales Photography had taken – registering with the e-yellowpages (**www.eyp.ph**). "Since H+Q is relatively new, we had to pick the right form of advertising, like **eyp**. My father also got **eyp**, so I'm sure they won't let me down."

Ranked first among Philippine yellowpages services in popular search engines, **eyp** is the most widely used online business listing in the country. It receives high online traffic, which for businesses mean more interactivity with prospective clients. In a six-month period, 80,000 of the registered businesses were contacted directly online through **eyp** (this didn't include companies who were contacted by phone or fax).

Advertising with eyp's Business Showcase, H+Q receives more than a thousand page views in its category every month. Through the **eyp** website, potential clients can easily find H+Q Digital Wedding Photography and its contact details for inquiries about their services. And for businesses starting out, signing up in the **eyp** microsite (**www.growyourbusiness.ph**) also helps.

As the online yellowpages of DPC, the Philippines' premier directory listings authority for the past 30 years, **eyp** positions its digital expertise to boost the online exposure of its registered businesses. Through the Business Showcase, which serves as a makapunan for the company that is immediately searchable from the **eyp** homepage, the Premium Listing, which puts the client company at the top of the list in its category, and Banner Ads, which promote the company's

"Publicity is very important. We knew we needed more exposure to be recognized, and to get more clients."

visibility even on combined pages of **eyp**'s site, **eyp** makes registered businesses like H+Q easily accessible to **eyp**'s average of 120,000 visitors (1.2 million page views) every month.

H+Q has gotten some of those visitors calling. "Because of **eyp**, the percentage of inquiries we've gotten has increased, from other wedding suppliers and colleagues recognize us now."

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"THE ART of Making Violin"

Rene Robles in Singapore

"THE ART OF MAKING Violin," an exhibit of works by Rene Robles, is running at the Metcalfe Arts Gallery in Singapore (20, Lee Tehik, Jurong Boat Quay).

Robles is recognized in the art world as the founder of the Anarchicism art movement, which he describes as "art that has power to arrest, transform and transcend." Anarchicism has a following in parts of Europe, America and Asia.

"The allure of Robles' art lies in his ability to transform a commonplace scene into a thing of beauty. He has demonstrated how mundane objects with no beauty like chairs, cables, fans and light bulb can be transformed by a generic spirit that employs color harmoniously into part of a beautiful composition.

Robles' unusual view of subjects, which he often paints on wrong side up, is meant to reveal the aloneness of the observer, saying, "This is my focus."

His first book, "Transcending," was published in 1987. followed by "Anarchicism" in 1994. His latest book, "The Art of Making Violin," was released last year in the new book are his award-winning artworks, unique sculptures and prints.

Some of the distinguished collectors of Robles' works include King Fadh of Saudi Arabia, King Bhumidol of Thailand, King Juan Carlos of Spain, Bill Clinton, the Vatican in Rome and numerous museums.

Educated at the University of Sto. Tomas, where he was a Fine Arts scholar, Robles has won awards in the Philippines and other countries and has over 62 solo exhibitions in different parts of the world.

Call Allen Tee at 6335981 (Singapore), or e-mail tanteau@singnet.com.sg. Visit www.moremuseum.com.

"WILD Wings"

Convocar's crazy . . .

From page D1

the subjects birds with their wings proportionally distorted like metal parts and wires, horses with three flanks and horses like metal fences.

It is easy to see that Convocar is trying to strike a balance between the natural and the mechanical. He appears to betray the artist's inscrutable bent toward the romantic.

The new tendency may be wishful thinking since even nature has to suffer from climate change and other excesses of mismanaging overdrive and industrial pollution. Can the artist's romantic spirit save the day for nature?

Convocar in his works insists that the artist's calling and mission remain valid. The artist will forever paint natural landscapes, even if such are already ruined by industrial fallout. The spirit of the artist lives on, come postmodern hell or high water.

LIFESTYLE

PRIDE OF PLACE
Augusto Villalon

Here we go again

I AM REPRINTING A LETTER FROM A respected professor at Ateneo de Manila University forwarded to me by the Heritage Conservation Society.

For background information, Barasoain Church, acknowledged by all Filipinos as an important national landmark, was thoroughly and professionally restored in 1998 for the Philippine Centennial celebrations.

All alterations and remodeling to the original structure were removed and the church was returned as close as possible to its appearance at the time of the historic Constitutional Convention of the Malolos Republic.

The existing convento adjacent to the church was conserved into a museum, and new parish offices and priests quarters were constructed at the rear of the church compound.

Dec. 28, 2007

Convento, Barasoain Church, Malolos

Dear Ma Gemma Cruz-Araneta,

I would like to bring to your attention [if you are not already aware of it] a project currently undertaken at the historic Barasoan Church in Malolos, Bulacan, seat of the first national congress of the Malolos Republic and also a declared historic landmark, by virtue of National Historical Institute [NHI].

Very recently, modern canopies have been added at the sides of the building, in front of the two major entrances facing the road. [see pictures 1. and 2], whereas

NEW canopies at back of church, new side, facing the street

Concrete canopies are being put up at Barasoain Church in violation of conservation rules. When will we ever learn?

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Paulo Avelino

A balanced life is a Sparkling Life.

"GOLGOTA Cut 4"

"JUDAS: Siguraduhin Ka ba sa Ginagawa Mo, Bro?"

Birth to death

An artistic convert (from writing to drawing, that is) gives her take on holy themes with a slight profane edge

"ELIZABETH at 80"

"JESUS: Siguraduhin Ka ba sa Ginagawa Mo, Bro?"

By Gilda Cordero-Fernando

MAY I BE EXCUSED for abandoning my trade and drawing (instead)? Art, or what passes for it, is less exacting and stressful, more instantaneous. Maybe it is more like gardening or cooking.

So, in time with the Holy Week, here's my interpretation of Heaven on my fridge door.

"Entrance Road"

Many European paintings depict Mary breastfeeding, so this new painting should be acceptable. It is, after all, a private moment, with only Joseph scowling.

And maybe a cow. A sheep. A cumbao (?). Agag. An excited dyan quacking. "It's a boy!" And an angel lighting the sky with a taper instead of carving the clouds.

"The Visit: Elizabeth at Eighty"

Mary's cousin, Elizabeth, was known to a select vintage (which I assumed to be 80 years old) since people then, like Methuselah at 120, were still alive and riding (Asian) bicycles. Or maybe they were just short.

"NO TIME for Portions"

But she conceived and her husband Zacharias was elated.

Proudly pregnant, Elizabeth visits Mary to tell her that the angel Gabriel is about to announce to her cousin the conception of the Savior in her womb.

"Via Crucis"

So, maybe because I saw the Mel Gibson film where Jesus is covered with wounds and bruises and looks more like a Peruvian challenger after a fight.

"Siguraduhin Ka ba sa Ginagawa Mo, Bro?"

Mischief, Peter asks, "Siguraduhin Ka ba sa ginagawa mo, bro?" (I don't know what the Ilin Russian character is doing there). If the Savior looks more comic than divine, it can only be due to my lack of skill.

"No Time for Perfumes"

If Mary Magdalene had been in hostel to appreciate Jesus at His descent from the Cross, what would the scene have been?

Fueled all, Mary Magdalene was so passionate an artifact Bible studies led to believing. She was a high-born lady (remember the expensive perfume?) and reformed, influential. Even in those traditional days, she could barge into any gathering and climb herself at the head of the table next to Jesus.

"The Last Temptation of Christ" by Nikos Kazantzakis puts that Jesus' last temptation was to reject His difficult mission. He could disappear from Great (He was God, after all!) Inner privileges, as many Magdalene and have a normal family life. It made me love Jesus more. The book was condemned, of course.

Perspective and perception

By Consuelo C. Tejero

PERSPECTIVE MAKES A LOT OF difference in art making. It can also magically distort or color one's perception of reality.

Reconstructing of kinds or views can render what is otherwise normal human anatomy into something monstrous. Tight cropping makes a flower look like female genitalia, while extreme close-up transforms a grasshopper into an extraterrestrial. Even a regular closeup of a smashed, decapitated, eyeless, rotten, distinct or gobbi can become primitive abstraction.

This play on perspective and its complex relationship with perception informs Alwin Villaluel's exhibit, "Love-Passion-Solitude," proves in oil on canvas, recently at West Gallery in the Antipolo, L/4, Bldg. 4, Old Megamall, Mandaluyong City.

The artist reveals he based his works on found images, published photographs of men from former, cloud formations. He has chosen images that lend "something to betrayal," to suggest the theme of a reality at war.

He is particularly drawn to the violent image of the cross, seeing "the relationship between a betraying storm and evening sky." While he is referencing war photographs and newspaper clippings of the past and in foreign shores, one can subtly associate it as locally depicting the state of our nation today.

"GREAT Expectations"

This is a noble theme, and the artist's realization of it is nothing short of potent. But it is his fantastical manipulation of perspective in his compositions that first strikes the viewer.

Villaluel reveals he does away with realism and grabs fast tracks directly on the canvas with pastel sketches and rough brushstrokes, forming the images "with a free hand to retain the soft visual effects" he has in mind.

He first makes sure to select an image that has a foreground or background, and minimize components and plays with it with the help of his computer. This is where he manipulates the perspective, sometimes adding a linear perspective into the composition.

He tries to triangle the visual formations or the height of Hurricane Katrina. In his attempt to "capture the urgency and impact of the subject," he uses red and other warm colors. To give the image depth and warmth, he says he creates the soft edges and irregular.

Said to "introduce perspective" by blurs the image. "Sometimes I blur the foreground to make it look like you're looking into a narrow field of depth," he explains.

The result is "Great Expectations," an interpretation of a flower and sky evoking over the land—photorealism bordering on abstraction. Or else a kind of incipient impressionism, much like the work of JMW Turner.

Villaluel studied Painting at the University of the Philippines College of Fine Arts. A finalist in the 1994 Shell/Philippine Students Art Competition and an honorable mention in the 2001 Art Association of the Philippines Annual Art Competition, he is growing himself to be a master of the image and equally masterly in abstraction.

He leaves any red lie what it means, and that's because his image-making is quite subjective. Much of reality, after all, depends on one's perception.

CANOPIES under construction at back of core (foreground, facing courtyard), and at entrance (background)

Here we go again

Front page ©

AS TWO more such canopies are currently under construction on the side of the church facing the courtyard (see picture 4). All pictures were taken on Jan. 24.

According to a church official, the new canopies were designed by an architect in order to prevent the entrance of water into the building during rain. According to the same official, the project was approved by HPB in a meeting in November 2007, attended by the parish priest, the architect, and a representative of HPB.

Very sincerely ...

This letter says it all. But only do Heaven canopies need to violate the conservation requirements of maintaining revitalized architectures of the historic monument. They are also constructed of concrete, a material totally incompatible with Spanish colonial adobe-and-lime construction.

Do have we go again.

Will this ever stop?

Heritage watch

The Heritage Conservation Society launches on 2008 Architectural Conservation Lectures in partnership with the Manila Historical and Heritage Commission.

Tom Heinrichs, a professional conservator practicing in the United States, will speak on conservation procedures and issues 9 a.m. 12 on at the Army and Navy Club in South Boulevard at Rizal Park in Manila.

The lecture is open to the public. Heinrichs conservations are encouraged by inhouse

COURTYARD of Barasoain Church

ing the Heritage Conservation Society for reservation of your intention to attend. Call 527-1229 or 527-2860.

In lieu of seminar fees, you kind donations to the HCS will be much appreciated.

E-mail the author at gilda.fernando@gmail.com

"ANTIDOTES for an Over-Civilized World," by Wire Tuazon

"DEEP Enough to Drown," by Carlo Ongchangco

Ongchangco at Big & Small

Carlo Ongchangco's "Deep Enough to Drown" will open March 7, 6 p.m., at The Big & Small Gallery in SM Megamall. The show says the wee side of works depicts "the cerebral journey in all of us."

Tuazon at Finale

"Antidotes for an Over-Civilized World," at Finale Art File (4/F, Lot3 Center, Pasay Rd. cor. Makati Ave., Makati) until March 13, is Wire Tuazon's "Wonders and Resistances." As in his past works, the artist continues the image, the line of text situated across the painting, and the title of the work to yield a thought-provoking weaving which results into a multi-layered reading of his canvases. They are at once a disconcerting fusions and updates of the key stylistic process, an ongoing conversation that questions and extends the explicit importance of Vertical, contemporary images that stretch our world. An inhabitants of this self-save world, we are stood, fanned and stroked by a deluge of consciousness, movies and information, all that problematize the nature of our answering-boss, make clear the technical certainties of our definitions. Call 8132316 or 8125004.

Calligraphy at Yuchengco Museum

"Flow of the Gentle Ink," an exhibit by master calligrapher Ong Buntrok opens in Yuchengco Museum on March 8. The exhibit includes meditations of "Flowering Home," a famous poem by ancient Tang dynasty poet Tao Yuan Ming. Ong has led the calligraphy of the Ang dynasty "Sage of Calligraphy" Wang Xi Chi after retiring from business in 1988. He also began to teach Bindhi and write scenes for a Chinese newspaper. Today, Ong Buntrok has regarded the Philippines as his home. He is also busy with his many civic and community-ready affairs, advertising coffee and sports—especially snooker, playing basketball and typing—between the Philippines and China. His calligraphy is highly praised, and his works have been exhibited in China, Japan, Singapore and South Korea. "Flow of the Gentle Ink," his fourth solo exhibit, will run until May 18 at the Yuchengco Museum, RCBC Plaza, Ayala Ave. cor. Sen. Gil J. Puyat Ave., Makati. Museum hours are Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Call 8897234 or visit www.yuchengcomuseum.org.

Visual Arts

Jimenez at Alliance Française

Pete Jimenez's ability to capture the subtle, personalities, situations and other subjects in his artworks is apparent in all of the 10 pieces in "Spring Collection," on till March 14, at Alliance Française de Makati's Total Gallery. Call 8867441 or 8921560.

BY PETE Jimenez

BY JESSE Bacolor-Macaraeg

Macaraeg in Baguio's Rains

The first solo exhibit of Jesse Bacolor Macaraeg, "Eye of a Puzzle," opens March 7 in Gallery the Ruins (35 Dominga St., Baguio City). Exhibit runs until March 23. Call 0917-6502785 or 600032.

Cebanglaung at Megamall

"UNTITLED"

Rillo at Silverlens

Rachel Rillo presents a photography exhibit until March 8 at Silverlens Gallery (2320 Pasong Tamo Ext., Makati). Her photographs are intricate in size, showing the viewer in what would otherwise be a common sight. Call 8180004 or 0917-8131818.

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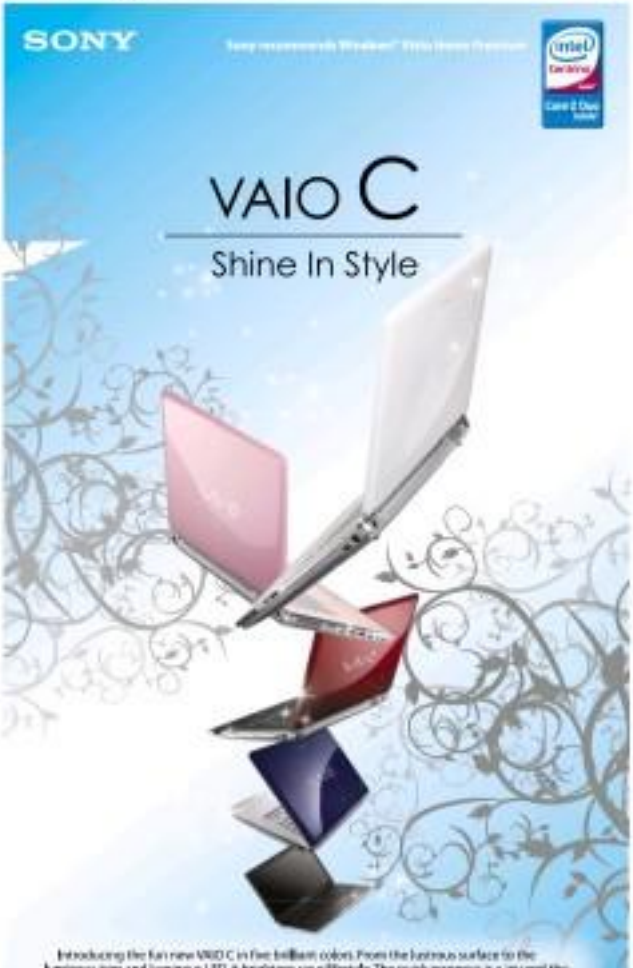


Marcel Antonio's 'Lotus Eaters'

"ACTS (an Ode of the Exile)"

"SUSPICIOUS Stories"

ARTIST MARCEL ANTONIO IS IN A class of his own. One of the youngest breed of Filipino artists, he has had the good fortune of having his talent and artistry appreciated and patronized locally and in such countries as Australia, Singapore and Scotland.

Antonio's works show haunting images that take its inspiration from literary and autobiographical sometimes. Taking an

MARCEL Antonio

origin from the "Iliad" and other literary narratives, his paintings leave much to the imagination and move the viewer to step and digress in introspection.

Antonio constantly uses the human figure in his works because he believes the human figure offers a perfect form and endless possibilities.

He is also a master of colors with an obvious preference for reds, bright hues that reinforce the emotions his works aim to convey. His strokes are sharp and fluid at the same time.

His one-man exhibition, "Lotus Eaters: Neo-Pantings," features his best works yet. The collection of 23 paintings showcases his mastery of the narrative and solidifies his place as one of the Philippines' premiere painters.

His works are on display at the Tektome Mall in Quezon City until March 6.

"THE LOTUS Eaters"

Alcuaz book to be launched

"Self Portrait"

"STILL Life with Cup and Lemons"

"STILL Life with Lemons, Berries and Jars"

"STILL Life on White Tabletop"

"CRISTO de Oro"

LUTHERIANS IN COORDINATION with the Alcuaz family is hosting the launching of the book "Federico Aguilar Alcuaz." March 6, 4 p.m., at The Forum, 4/F Fully Booked, Building 5, 9512 Bonifacio High Street, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig.

With a career spanning 58 years, Alcuaz is one of the most internationally awarded and acclaimed Filipino artists. He has held exhibits at leading galleries in the Philippines, Spain, Portugal, Singapore, United States, Germany, Poland.

Among his numerous awards are the first prize at Premio Nicanor (1957) and Pela Francisco Goya (1962) in Barcelona.

In Paris, he was awarded the Diploma of Honor at the International Exhibition of Art Liber in 1961; the Decoration of Arts, Letters and Sciences from the French government in 1968; and the Order of Peruvio Grenan in 1984. He was also awarded the Presidential Medal of Merit in 2006.

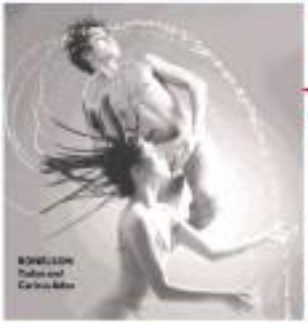
Alcuaz's works are included in the collection of some 20 museums and major cultural institutions in the world, including the Museum of Contemporary Art in Barcelona, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Madrid, the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam Museum of London, the Museum of Modern Art of Warsaw, the Museum of Modern Art of Bratislava and the Philips Collard Museum of The Netherlands.

The 64-page book showcases the artist's life and rare works from his illustrious career.

"Federico Aguilar Alcuaz" is written by Jack Tiongco, art critic and businessman.

Call 7219251 or 7219418.

Leisure will take on a new meaning... soon.
LANDCO PACIFIC



BOMBILLON
Trullas and
Carlos Adlao

LIFESTYLE

BONNIE Pickard and Regal Gabriel

Ballet Philippines presents 'Latin Heat'

BALLET PHILIPPINES, the country's premiere dance company, caps its 38th season with the sensual, flamboyant rhythms of the salsa, rumba, bossa nova, reggae and Caribbean music in "Latin Heat."

Featured choreographies for this dance spectacle are Mikel Lagmay, Jeffrey Espejo and Noemi Tolosa-Jones. BP artistic director is Ben Dimson. Executive director is Sandy Hontiveros.

Special guest performers are the Guitar Friends Ensemble composed of guitar aficionados from various fields: Maestro José Valdez, professor of music and classical guitarist; Armando "Tako" Deutchs, classical guitarist and luthier; Greg Ty, host/emcee and sportscaster; Vince Abella, professional and entrepreneur; Judy Ying, businesswoman; Dinny Tesic, general surgeon; Rafe Hontiveros-Gatmaitan, guitar student of St. Scholastica's College School of Music; Hiu-ay Montifalcon, BP principal and movie executive; and Antonio "Tony Boy" Consuegra.

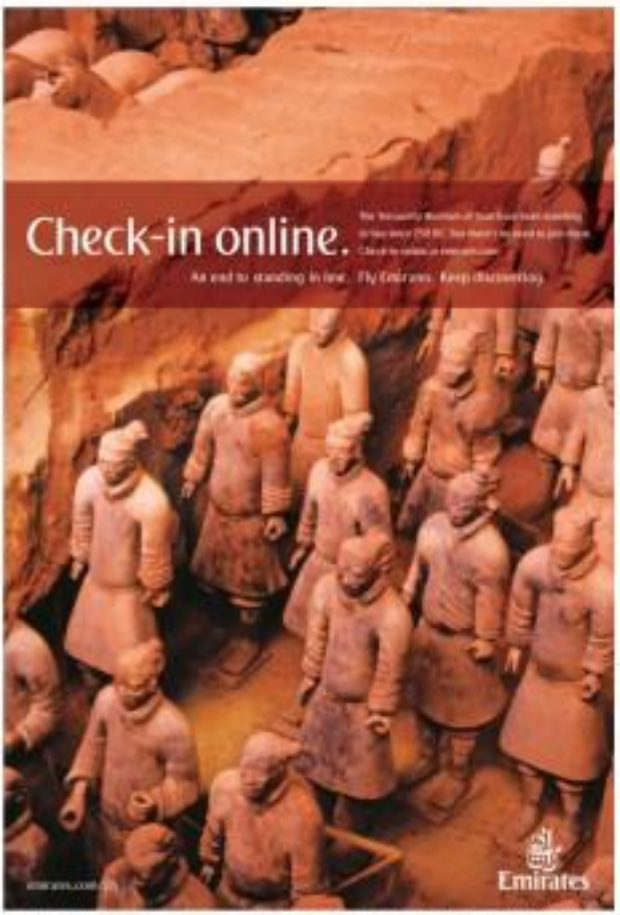
Adding more heat to this Latin extravaganza is Isles Manila, the Iberoamer sales group under Philippines headed by Christine Rigor.

"Latin Heat" runs March 14-16 at the CCP Little Theater. For more information, call 5518221, 5511883 or 0320011, or e-mail balletphilippines@pldtdsl.net.

IT'S BALLET Philippines' 38th season.

SO LATINO Isme dancers

CARIBBEAN Isman and cohort



YOUNG Ballet dancers

Ballet company stages romantic production

MUSICAL/POINTE BALLET STUdent artists will stage a revue of mixed classical, jazz and rock dance pieces in Lina de la Fuente's choreographed interpretations of Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" March 15, 8 p.m., at the Irene Lee Theater in Ateneo de Manila University.

The ballet production features Peter Ana Jana of the Philippine Ballet Theater and Yuan del Rosario.

The gala is supported by Subic's Low-Out Filled Milk and Resident Holmes.

Tickets at P250 will be sold at the lobby. Call 5917, 8075044 for more information on the production.

Also, call the number to inquire about Ballet Philippines's special summer and regular ballet programs at Mary Lorenzo Sports Center.

DANCERS with partners Shakespeare's well-known tragedy

CCP president Nestor Jardin is 2008 Rockefeller awardee

CULTURAL Center of the Philippines president Nestor G. Jardin (left, center) is this year's John Rockefeller III Asian Cultural Council Award recipient. He is with Ralph Samuelson, director of the Asian Cultural Council New York; Elizabeth McCormack, chair of the Asian Cultural Council; Maribel Ongpin and Helen Sardino, board members of the Asian Cultural Council Philippines; and Bonnie Escaler, president of the Asian Cultural Council. —CONTRIBUTED

THIS YEAR'S RECIPIENT OF THE Asian Cultural Council's John D. Rockefeller III Award is CCP president Nestor G. Jardin.

The award, established in 2006 through a special endowment donation from The JDR 3rd Fund, is a $35,000 award recognition that aims to honor an individual from Asia or the United States who has made a particularly significant contribution to the international understanding, promotion or study of the visual or performing arts of Asia.

Jardin, a distinguished arts advocate and educator, has devoted his extensive career to championing the arts and artists of Southeast Asia and the Philippines, and working to create an environment in which these can flourish.

Aside from his work as CCP president, commissioner of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, and chair of the Advisory Council of the Philippine High School for the Arts, Jardin also spearheaded the creation of the Philippine Cultural Educational Plan, a comprehensive national plan for arts and cultural education.

Born in Livona City in 1952, Jardin began his involvement with the arts more than 30 years ago as a dancer with the University of the Philippines Filipiniana Dance Company and later as a choreographer for the group's resident ballet Philippiniana.

When he left dance in 1981, Jardin studied Arts Management with grant support from a 1984 Asian Y. Ongpin Scholarship at the Asian Institute of Management, an Asian Cultural Council fellowship in Arts Administration that same year and, in 2000, an Ateneo-Getty scholarship to study at Banff Centre for Management in Canada.

Jardin subsequently served as artistic director of Ballet Philippines, president of the CCP Dance Foundation, and vice president of the World Heart Ballet League, before becoming VP and COO of arts director in 1995.

Jardin has been a committed educator in the Department of Arts and Letters program at the University of the Philippines.

He is one of Southeast Asia's most active and persuasive ambassadors for the arts, representing the Philippines as a delegate and speaker to numerous international conferences, and organizing many important cultural gatherings in the country.

These have included events associated with the 1998 Philippine Centennial, the Third Asian Dance Festival in 1999, the Philippine International Theater Festival and Conference, the Asian International Choral Festival, the annual Philippine Arts Festival.

His Rockefeller award recognizes Jardin as a respected leader among his peers who has made, and will continue to make, a prominent contribution to the cultural life of Southeast Asia.

"BARANGAY"

"A CHILD from China"

Nestor Torre keynotes UST CineVita festival

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER's entertainment columnist and Sunday Special editor Nestor Torre will deliver the keynote address when CineVita, the annual film festival "celebrating life, truth and faith," opens March 5, 8 a.m., at the University of Santo Tomas.

CineVita is organized by the Varsitarian, the 80-year-old student publication of UST, and will run March 3-7 at the Thomas Aquinas Research Center auditorium, UST, España, Manila.

Opening film is Brillante Mendoza's intensely welcomed film "Foster Child." Actress Cherry Pie Picache will address the audience/room after the screening.

Closing film on March 7 is Mario Flores' 2007 Cinemalaya finalist "Still Life," about a suicidal artist and his experiences on creative with a young woman during an encounter rapture.

Bent on its second year, CineVita will showcase independent films, documentaries and shorts from amateur to clients, guided Filipino directors, drawing flows to be screened are Mendoza's "Foster," Jay Lebrusa's "Tribu," Jade Gaitis's "Dado," Neil Tenoperez "Tribulo," Joey Velasco's "Hanggang ngayon," and a documentary by UST Marking students.

The directors, writers and stars of the films will be featured in an audience forum after the screenings.

International films will also be featured, such as Lloyd Kramer's "Five People You Meet in Heaven," Vincent Ward's "What Dreams May Come" and Mimi Leder's "Pay It Forward."

CineVita is a nonprofit and educational endeavor of the Varsitarian together with the UST Institute of Religion, UST Journalism Society, UST Literati Society, and UST Guardians Philosophiae.

All documentaries and local films are open to the public. Full-length foreign films are exclusive to listeners, film critics and students. Admission is free.

For festival program and schedule of screenings, log on to www.cinevitaust.com. Call 406-1611 local 3205 or contact JC Cordova at 0905-4253778 or 0905-3803262.

DIRECTOR Joe Libertas on the set of "Biyo," Acuil, "Lakaba," and, extreme left, "Gumbo"

Fine heritage music collection

From page F1

singing parts in "Lobregata," "Mayron," "Simon Buenvenger," "Bonta del Dorotan," "La Shoonada," "Tino Cacho," "Fiasti," "Sinkhandela."

Musician Ortigas, director of the Philippine Heritage Library, says the Hiraig Collection at the Philippine Heritage Library started with a donation from a private collection and grew many times over when the National Commission for Culture and the Arts turned over its collection of Philippine recordings in 2006. They consisted of 960 phonograph records in 78, 33 and 45 rpm.

The recently concluded "Bravo Filipino!" concert was conceptualized when Jaime Zobel de Ayala visited the library and came across the extensive Hiraig Collection.

Says Ortigas, "It was Don Jaime's discovery of the collection that led one thing to another. As an artist himself, his appreciation of the arts is quite broad and his respect for the artist is quite deep. I'm top of that, he has been a consistent supporter of the arts."

Don Jaime's role in the conduct of the "Bravo Filipino!" concert were planned by the musical collectors.

He points out: "Our goal was to find the best examples of artistic excellence right here at home and not have it be all the country to see, marvel at and enjoy. We wanted to find a way of celebrating Philippine arts not only by turning to the past but also by reaching past accomplishments with the abundance of Filipino talent that we have today."

Ortigas says this year's "Bravo Filipino!" is actually wider in scope as the tribute to Filipino talents goes beyond music and extends to talents in dance, visual arts and photography.

Adds Ortigas: "Aside from the recently conducted concert and fashion show, the public can look forward to an exhibit on Philippine music. And will be brought to Ayala Malls. Here, they can listen to some music from the past and see some music memorabilia. There is also a music with images of past and present artists and contemporaries celebrating different artistic disciplines."

(tel.)892-1401 or e-mail bravo@laya@philheritage.org.ph

"BRAVO! Filipino" concert on Feb. 19 features new arrangements of Hiraig songs.
PHILIPPINE HERITAGE

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ATOMS AND WEBOY — BY LYNDA MARCELLANO

LOVEBIRDS — BY ELIZABETH CHONGLO

MIKE PACHECO — BY MANO ABRERA

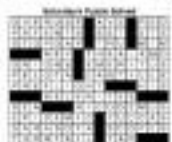
BEN — BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

By Michael T. Williams

Crossword #6

Solve today's Puzzle Solved



HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

CONCEPTS SU DOKU

Concepts Sudoku

By Dave Green

1			8		7	2		4
	8	2		6			3	
4				1			8	
3				7				2
	1	9				3	5	
8				3				1
	7			8				9
	9			5		4	1	
5		1	3		9			6

Difficulty Level: ★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

6	2	7	1	9	4	5	3	8
4	1	3	8	2	5	9	7	6
9	8	5	7	3	6	2	4	1
2	4	1	9	7	8	3	6	5
7	5	6	2	4	3	1	8	9
3	9	8	6	1	7	4	2	7
1	7	4	3	8	9	6	5	2
8	6	2	4	1	7	8	9	3
5	3	9	5	6	2	4	1	7

JOVITA Fuentes in "Madrina Buenafe," her recording of "Ay, Ay, Kalisud" is in the Himig collection.

The Filipinas Heritage Library's Himig Collection consists of 963 original Pilipino music dating back to 1908

Fine heritage music collection

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

HOW DID THE FIRST GENERATION OF Filipino singers sound like? How do their voices compare with the present generation of singers?

To answer this question, all you have to do is pay a quick visit to the Filipinas Heritage Library in Makati City and look over its Himig Collection consisting of 963 original Pilipino music dating back to 1908.

On one hand are the old recordings of trailblazers prima Reben Tagalog, the "Asawan Kita" series of Arsenia Sigeion Reyna, the first recording virtuoso of Celeste Legaspi, and the storied output of Nora Aunor, Imelda Papin and Ryan Cayabyab with his "15 voices."

The old collections are shining showcase of the golden age of Filipi Records with the musical direction of Leopoldo Silos.

The most astounding part of the collection is the forgotten voices of the first generation of Filipino recording singers.

Listened to the 1908 recording of Iloko's "Ang Mayat" is interpreted by Maria Carpio, accompanied by the Molina Orchestra of National Artist for Music Antonio Molina.

The voice is pure lyric sweet with piercing quality though a bit metallic on the top notes. It is largely unmoved but this doesn't make it less powerful. Carpio epitomizes the natural talent of the Filipino versus the refined inputs of specialists from music conservatories.

There is a song titled "Kumunsing" rendered by turnsole star of yore Atang de la Rama and it melds a title but veritable musical unique in her era of singers.

Technique and pure artistry are what Jovita Fuentes showcases in her recording of the Visayan folksong "Ay, ay, Kalisud." She has a stunning vocal line that is even more magical as she applies a restrained presidency in the song's haunting ending. The same may be said of an early recording of "Bitoing Marikit" rendered by Conching Rosal.

But an even more astounding vocal revelation is the voice of Filipino bass baritone José Mossegrêd Santiago, who sings a stunning version of Francisco Santiago's "Ave Maria." This Filipino singer has a solid sense of legato and a fine shading of cantabile which often eludes most singers.

First and last

For the record, Mossegrêd Santiago is the first and the last Filipino singer to sing at La Scala di Milan, heeded over by the likes of Mario Callas and Luciano Pavarotti during their respective opera salleys.

During the 1902-03 La Scala season, the Filipino bass baritone sang the roles of Rasela ("Aida"), Spanofucile ("Rigoletto") and Lothario ("Mignon"), logging a total 11 performances.

He went on to sing in other opera houses in Italy, South America and the United States with roles in "Die Walkure" (Wotan), "Siegfried" (Wanderer), and equally challenging roles in "Tannhauser," "Lohengrin," "Tristan und Isolde," "Parsifal," "Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg" and "Der Ring des Nibelungen."

FROM PREVIOUS

FILIPINO bass baritone José Mossegrêd Santiago's recording of Francisco Santiago's "Ave Maria" is stunning.

ENTERTAINMENT

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Maroon 5's Big Dome gig sold out
SOLD-OUT TICKETS TO THE MAROON 5 MILAY THE ARANETA Coliseum are gone. Bandmembers must something fishy. What makes this American pop-rock band's much sought-after act? Good songs and three Grammy awards, among other things. Page 60

Ne-Yo could be the next Michael Jackson

Don't stay home this summer.
Check out the TRAVEL AGENCIES section of the
DPC YELLOW PAGES
PRINT • INTERNET • MOBILE

By Pachelo Cornejo/Inquirer

IT'S NOT CLEAR TO US WHY Shaffer Smith adopted a stage name like Ne-Yo. Aside from sounding catchy and easy to remember, could the moniker also herald the arrival of a great new ("new," ranot) talent—the kind that would place him in the ranks of Michael Jackson?

Jackson fans may find the comparison premature, since Ne-Yo has been on the scene for less than two years. But his popularity as a singer is enormous, and his influence as a songwriter so pervasive, that he's reportedly been hired to work on material for, guess what?—a new Jackson album.

Review

Flashes

A few minutes in to Ne-Yo's concert on Friday at the Araneta Coliseum, there were flashes of Jackson's 18th-century—even mid-1980s, at the height of his powers as King of Pop, before the troubles began. This was because Ne-Yo, wearing a fedora over a black suit, started commandeering his high tenor vocals with quick, snappy moves around the mic stand, recalling Jackson's celebrated performances following the release of "Thriller."

And, for a split-second, Ne-Yo was caught doing the moonwalk.

But whatever similarities or homage were apparent, we could not overlook the fact that Ne-Yo was his own man. He excelled in giving life to brooding R&B songs that explored the complications of love and relationships: a prime example was "So Sick," his first big hit, which also opened the Araneta show.

Despite the similarities, we could not overlook the fact that he was his own man

Full blast

R&B is black music that young fans enjoy because of the dance beat, which is a constant in many of Ne-Yo's songs. And almost throughout the show, this beat was in full, nerve-shaking blast courtesy of three keyboardists (one of whom also manned the turntables), plus a live drummer. With this kind of backup, the bombastic groove in "Miss Independent" was deeply felt.

That number, which played around notions of sex as a dangerous habit, was followed by a track with a more explicit display of pleasure—Ne-Yo surrounded by scantily clad black female dancers carrying whips. Like in a porno movie.

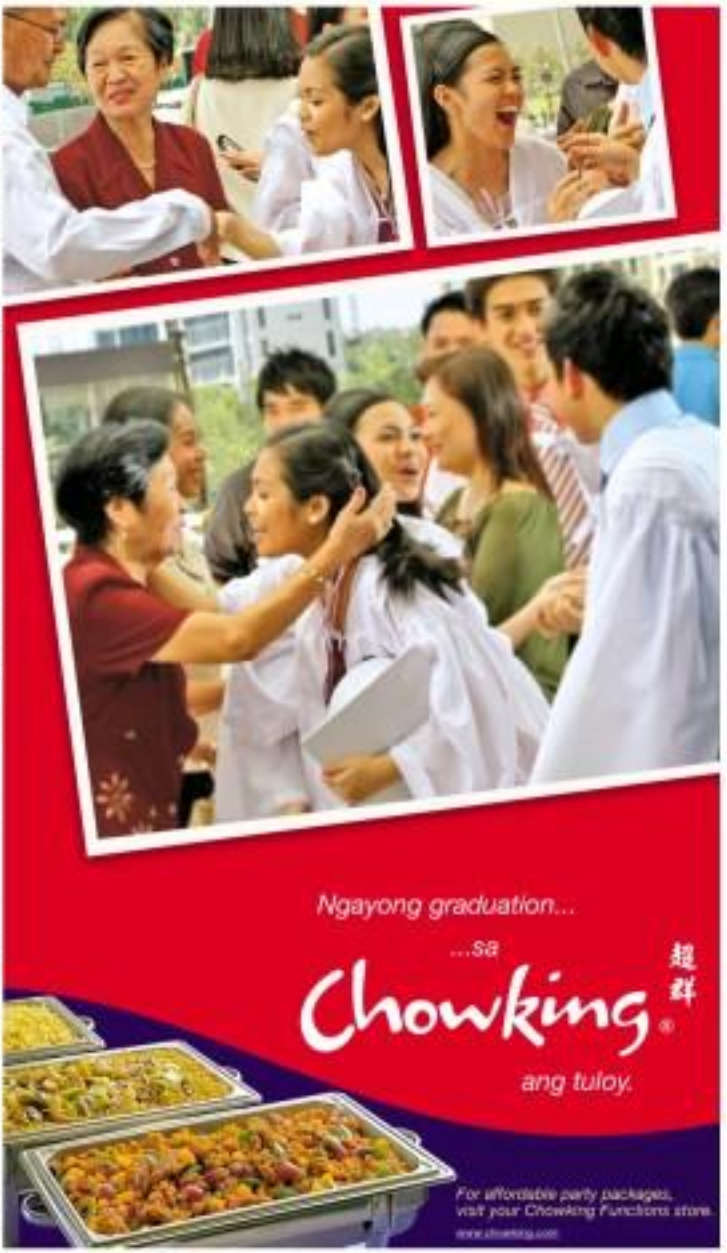
In a separate segment, Ne-Yo gave one of the ladies a spank on the butt, and proceeded to snap out the brassiere of another—not exactly a pleasant sight, we would imagine, for families in the audience that included little children.

Of course it was all for show, and really commonplace act for most black artists, much like the "make some noise. Throw your hands in the air!" ill routine which the crowd loved just as well.

The full packed Big Dome couldn't have possibly contained just fans, but to make sure everybody was reprised of his achievements, Ne-Yo had the DJ play some of the other hits he co-wrote with the likes of Rihanna ("Unfaithful") and Beyonce ("Irreplaceable").

A good old fashioned salute that Ne-Yo, as a hip crisis achieved by millions of unpronounceable lovers. Thankfully unchewed was, "Relationship is work, it's not always easy, make it work ..."

Moments later, everybody went wild as he introduced the title track of his Grammy-winning latest album, "Because of You."



Two new reality challenges stand out

American TV has come up with its version of a Philippine show

WHEN GMA-7'S MUSICAL QUIZ SHOW, "All Star K: The Fifth Videoke Challenge" started to heating, we were amazed at the ability of its contestants to quickly fill in the blanks with the missing lyrics of a wide range of songs—and to sing them incredibly, to boot.

To us, this was no "only in the Philippines" quiz format, since Filipinos are most musical than most, and love to break out into song at the drop of a song title/snippet.

Well, what do you know? After quite a number of years, American TV has finally caught on to the challenging format and come up with its own version of the musical quiz show, "Don't Forget the Lyrics," seen locally Sundays, 8:30 p.m. on the Silver channel.

Compared to "K," the American program is easier on its contestants, because it features only easy-to-sing and singer-of-a-time. This makes the contestant to concentrate on a specific song challenge, unlike the proceedings on K, where multiple-impact contests vary, easy numbers, and a wide range of song genres is sometimes involved.

On the other hand, the American contestants have a harder time of it, because they have to remember the entire lines of lyrics, rather than just a word or phrase in a title.

In fact, it's quite amazing how some of its featured amateur singers can perform some songs with musical aplomb and flourish, a lot of backs are involved as each contestant moves up the rung of accelerating winnings, adding to the tension each singer feels, and to the performances ... and entertainment ... level is generally high.

Dating game

As this new reality challenge show on the tube is "Age of Love," which tweaks the usual dating or club-hacked formats by providing its resident female with two sets of potential girlfriends! The first group is a 10, 20s, while the second is in its 40s.

Thus, the fight for the resident hunk's fancy has forewarned intercoms generational battle between "young" and "mature" women. The big question, of course, is: Which age group will get the more eligible bachelor's nod? Gosh, friends! The first group is a 10, 20s, while the second is in its 40s.

If it's a young contender it's just for the young. But, if his older woman wins, it "proves" that experience in seduction holds the edge over his athletic proximity youth!

This would be a compelling and heartening demonstration for mature female viewers, and the pressure of this knowledge would keep those watching the show from ever week to week.

Assured ratings

As for their young counterparts, they too would watch the show to see if in their "experience," so good ratings for the program are pretty much assured.

The last time we caught "Age of Love," the contenders had been whittled down to two mature and two young women. All of them professed to be smitten with the show's handsome hunk, and appeared even prepared to do "anything" to establish his real and reel-life bond.

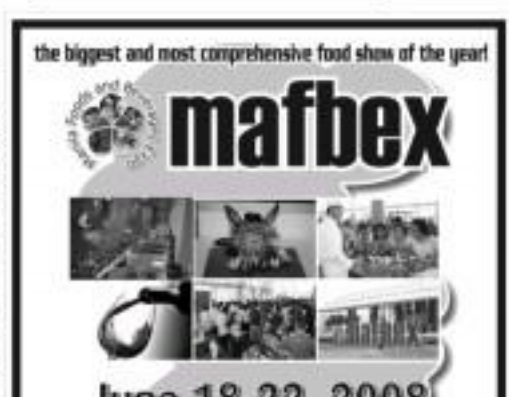
But, wonder of wonders, by the time the relevant had ended, our mature women had opted to leave the show because she confessed that she didn't feel all that keen about with its resident bachelor—such as of the two remaining younger females also dropped out, because she was scared of flying and couldn't join in the group on its trip to Australia to meet the hunk's parents!

Those sound developments left only two females, one in her mid-20s and the other in her late 40s. Up to this one's final leg, the grandmotherly hunk favors an older lover.

'The Water Horse'

Based on the book by Dick King-Smith, the new fantasy adventure, "The Water Horse," tells the story of a lonely young Scottish boy named Angus (Axel Bird) who takes home a mysterious, magical egg—and soon finds himself raising an amazing creature, the mythical "water horse" of Scottish lore.

As he tries to protect his friend, reluctant foster Crowe, Angus begins a journey of discovery, uncovering a secret that goes back to a bygone



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DID YOU KNOW...

The spirit of punk

LONDON—The organizers of British punk have been quietly preparing for its future in a new generation in a tiny London loft, but the secret is out and about to hit fanzine.

Featuring survivors of the Clash, the Sex Pistols, Generation X and a celebration of young bands have revived the spirit of 1976's London punk explosion in a series of small gigs in the Clash's old stomping grounds in London's Notting Hill neighborhood.

Clash founding member Mick Jones has remained in his room until, judging by the six-week residency at the packed out Bar On The Green, it's enough time to his punk ideals.

For just 10 pounds ($20) at the bar every Sunday, Jones leads like-like Sex Pistols bass guitarist Glen Matlock and Stranglers' Jean-Jacques Burnel through classics in the tradition.

Sportsman in global trek

WORLD-PARAGLIDING RECORD HOLDER and renowned extreme sportsman Jalil Hadill journeys across the world in "Fearless Planet," on Discovery Channel tomorrow morning at 10 p.m.

Viewers take a thrilling ride with Hadill through the Sahara desert, Slovenian hillside, Great Barrier Reef and Grand Canyon.

The show uncovers the site's unique origins and how they continue to change due to the effects of various factors, such as erosion and global warming.

'Sea Patrol'

Hallmark Channel's big ocean adventure drama series, "Sea Patrol," will air every Wednesday 9 p.m., starting March 12.

Leading the cast is Lee McGann as the aeroplane Gen 604 Gorgo, who is paired against his co-Pilot, Lt. Commander Mike Hyatt (Ian Stroshin).

On March 12, Hallmark runs "Hillcrest A Town Secrets 2," featuring the exploits of FBI's New York Missing Persons Squad.

'Seven Wonders'

Washington until March 14, 9 p.m., Discovery Travel & Living presents the lavish culture and history of the new world wonders in "Seven Wonders of the Ancient World."

Viewers will get to take a look at the famous man-made marvels and learn the standing stories of the following landmarks: Chichen Itza in Yucatan, Mexico; the great Christ the Redeemer statue in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Colosseum in Rome, Italy; Great Wall of China in Beijing, Machu Picchu in Cuzco, Peru; Petra in Jordan; and Taj Mahal in Agra, India.

'Oprah'

Distant power couples, music maestro and fashion guru Seal and Heidi Klum, Stevie Wonder and his Miss Mosely, and superstar athletes Gabrielle Reece and Laird Hamilton will give "Oprah" an inside look at their lives on

March 3-5 p.m. on the Hallmark Channel.

On March 26, 8 p.m., the show will feature some of the biggest names in country music—Shania Twain, Faith Hill, Tim McGraw and Kenny Chesney.

"Oprah" is on weekdays, 1 p.m., Monday to Wednesday, 10 p.m. and Saturdays, 6 p.m.

'Race to Mars'

Discovery Channel's new four-part series "Race to Mars" integrates real simulation the first manned mission to the Red Planet.

Airing every Wednesday starting March 5, it captures every moment and drives viewers to the heart of the mission...from leaving Earth's orbit to the return voyage home.

Episodes are on Thursday at midnight, 1 a.m. and 10 a.m.

'Baby Mammoth'

An international team of paleontologists, a mysterious ecologist attempt to unravel the mysteries of a baby mammoth—from an ice mine laboratory in Yakutsk where the remains are located, to a high-tech facility in Tokyo that performs some of the most sophisticated 3-D imaging of warmer animals. "Baby Mammoth" will air on March 9, 2 a.m. and March 9, 8 a.m.

'Local Flavor'

Discovery Travel & Living's brand new airport series "Iron Chef's 'Local Flavor'" explores how food, family and culture influence each other to express the unique personality of a given country.

From local markets and local restaurants to local eateries and food institutions, it showcases the local flavor of each country through the eyes of families with passion and love for the culinary arts.

The show airs every Thursday 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and encores every Friday at 9 a.m.

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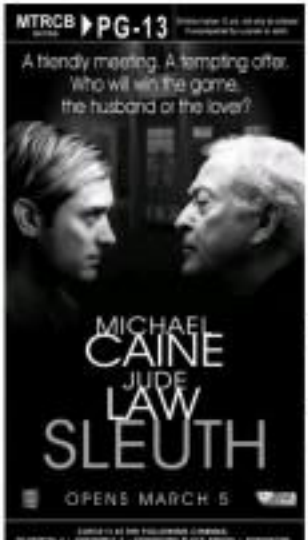
Now, his dream show

Boy Abunda begged for it, and got it: 'Inside the Actor's Studio,' RP-style



By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Rodel Rutaro

PICTURE THIS. BOY ABUNDA, one of the most influential show biz personalities today, begging his producers to allow him to host a program similar to that of his idol, American writer and poet James Lipton.

Boy has finally got it. The award-winning TV host announced this to a small group of writers at the launch of "Inside the Cinema," his new show on the Cinema One channel.

"I've always wanted to do a show similar to 'Inside the Actor's Studio.' Kindi pa ako si James Lipton, pinapamukha ko na 'yan," he said. Boy hastily added, however, that he's no Lipton clone: "He is a revered teacher. I'm a student, I'm not. I'm an interviewer. I ask questions. I'm okay na ko sinulat na lahat, all sessions of style, doing what is best. Mas di-ko-nais na maging guardian-angel sa guests, because I know I will always have a star of evening the show."

"Inside the Cinema" will air every second Tuesday of the month. The pilot episode on March 11 (9 p.m.) will feature actress Shaina Magdayao. Other future guests in-study show ng Jessa Pilar Gomez, Michael de Mesa and Joel Torre.

Is it true that you're very hands-on in the production aspect?

It's a work in progress. We're discovering a lot of things as we work on the show. We hope to have more audience participation.

Our director, Oscar Reza, 28, is an indie producer/filmmaker. He's responsible for the regional film "When Tinanao Meets Delpedro." He has very interesting quirks.

Our first four episodes were shot in Iloilo and Cebu. There were many interesting side lights. [For instance] we learned that in her first movie, Pilar Pilapil was Snow Raver' double. As a young actor, Joel Torre vowed to never take off his clothes on-screen. But while he was working with Celso Ad Castillo, he got so involved in one scene "di siya namalayan na nahubad habad na siya.

Can you name some dream interviews?

I've stopped dreaming. I used to dream of interviewing the late Fernando Poe Jr. But now na wala, bawal na may nanay. But anyway, why did Nida to become an actress? Her story of us know that it was because she joined a contest, got crowned and was forced to stay on an island there. A street boy lang siya noon.

In the show's teaser, you said 'sa loob ng things can happen inside the studio.' Ano ba 'yun?

Thanks for Tanglaw, despite my quirks as a writer

MY PROFUSE THANKS TO THE 10-turned members of Gawad Tanglaw for declaring me as Best Entertainment Columnist. I am overwhelmed! I must admit that there were times I felt like giving up when I got embroiled in one controversy after another. The GT medal is my reward for staying on when I would have rather left.

Entertainment is supposed to be fun. But it's not always so. There are just some characters who dwell the fun and turn everything into a nightmare. Behold the meddler and the meddlee! You just have to grin and bear it, and go on with the show.

Allow me just this once to confess my quirks as a writer. I write letters sadly prosaic. I love the adrenaline rush when it's almost deadline time. I seem to get writer's block when I have to write my column in advance. I like doing things at the last minute.

Funniest moment

Unlike most writers, I neither smoke nor drink coffee. But while typing, I must chew Orbit gum till I'm done. And I meddle with Glenrose as I gather my thoughts. So after every column, my desk looks like a field of tissue and a mountain of gum. My kids keep teasing me that I should be the endorser of Orbit and Glenrose already.

I don't solve mess when I interview celebs. I just listen to what they are saying and what they're not. If their manner is worth writing about, then I should stand out in my memory.

One of my funniest memories during an interview was when I mistook one young actor for another I was flying away with my questions and the poor kid was clueless. He was too polite to tell me that it was a case of mistaken identity.

Wrong spelling

Gretchen Barretto came out this year. "It's Dolly not Dodie and Tony not Tonee. So funny ..." She was referring to the names of the two people she cited last year that were inadvertently misspelled in a previous column. She wouldn't even like a simple name game. Whose name is it anyway, anyway?

No gimmicks!

DWB 7 turns another classic Pinoy movie into a compelling TV series in "Sine Novela Presents: Kapag ang Lang Wala," which premieres today on Primetimers on Skypro.

Based on the 1991 blockbuster about two women from different worlds who seek the same dream, the series stars Lorna Tolentino, Ara Mina, Glaiza de Castro and Marky Cielo.

Phew! Ate and Lorli's romance cooled up to pave the way for their warm-up in the movies!

Tolen's been courting me for two months now," said Lorli. "It's no gimmick." What has Ate changed in her? "He has taught me not to be judgmental."

Leave the judging to Tawsue if then-boyfriend are worthy of each other.

Sentimental Freddie

Freddie Aguilar goes anti in his new album, "Love Songs," (produced by FAME—Freddie Aguilar Music Enterprise and distributed by Sony Records). It features collaborations with artists whose lives have crossed paths with him along the way. Like his duet with Nonoy Suaco in "Kung Lamang" and "Hindi Maghuhulugan" with the comedy team of Dino Cabarios. Does he aim to have another sweetheart for the "band"? "My priorities are different now," he said. "I've reached my peak and I don't think I have to prove myself anymore."

The album of Ka Freddie's mission is truly like an "amak" that knows how to get to you.

E-mail: watertightdeluxe@yahoo.com

THE TUMAKOLIT was also huge during the Manila auditions.

'Pinoy Idol' hopeful feels crushed

FROM FRANCIS DATO (*f_arnisdato@yahoo.com*)

This letter is in connection with the auditions for "Pinoy Idol," held last Feb. 23 in Cubao, Quezon City.

I'm 24 years old and a resident of 45 Bonanza St., Brgy. 33, San Nicolas Boaco North.

I'm a huge fan of "American Idol." I have eagerly watched each episode of past and present seasons, so that by now I think I know the process by which idols are selected.

After "Philippine Idol" aired on ABC 5 last year, I composed a song that I intended to present during the second season. Unfortunately, there was no second season ABC 5.

When rumors came out last September that GMA had brought the Fremantle Media franchise, I decided to try out and hopefully present my composition. I certified it "Pinoy Idol," and I hoped it would be used as program theme song.

I turned up last Feb. 28 in Studio Dagupan for the audition there. I queued up, and was given the tag number 18800 by the crew. Like the long backlog of other hopefuls on that day, I expected to sing before the judges Gigo Alcasid, Julius Magdangal and Wyngard Tracy.

Unfortunately, I was not a finalist of any of the three judges. Instead, there were those pre-screening sessions where we sang in front of three people—I assumed they were part of the crew. I had never seen them on TV, nor even heard of their musical background.

Also, we sang without cameras in the room. Ironically, there was this streamer in front of Studio that had said, "If you don't want to appear on TV, leave."

Anyways, when I entered with my song and pre-screening routine, I handed the "judges" a copy of the song. But only did they not allow me to sing it; I was told "Pinoy Idol" wasn't the right venue for original compositions. I disagree. I believe should the song "Pinoy Idol" be sung in front of ...

I need to ask you, if those people at the Studio Dagupan have sufficient credentials or have even had any musical training.

Is GMA 7 permitted to change the mechanics of the program? Is the network trying to cut costs by not flying in each and every audition and employing amateur judges?

If it is, the essence of the show is lost. "Idol" is supposed to discover the next singer-performers, composers and stars of tomorrow.

Is the Kapuso network proud of this? I wonder, let me be sing acting-ang-ayaw!

***

We're glad that we got to observe the Cebu regrets for "Pinoy Idol," so we have some answers for you.

The process that you underwent is called "pre-casting." "This is a screening process, so that the judges will not have to listen to, say, all 50,000 people who auditions. You will notice on the show 'Idol' that, sometimes, a whole audition is packed. After much editing, it just appears that the process takes only a single day. It does not.

Pre-casting is not supposed to be televised—it's in the rules...and so, you didn't see any cameras. And the "auditioners" you refer to are normally voice coaches and/or talent managers. Their credentials, for that stage of the screening, is more than sufficient. We hope you trust us on this; we know them.

Whichever of them told you that the show was looking for eight names for your composition wasn't pulling your leg. The "Idol" search is for the next big recording star, hits and albums. —Ed.

FEEDBACK

New live action, animation studio in RP

A ROMANTIC COMEDY STARRING local and Hollywood actors is the first production of Radikon Studios, a young film production outfit whose holding company is based in the United States.

The company recently set up an office in Manila to take advantage of the abundance of "high-quality talent" in local entertainment. Radikon Studios said it has invested in live action production and will also open one an animation studio.

"There is no doubt about the kind of talent found in the Philippines," said Steve Gaddini, chief operating officer of Radikon Live Holdings LLC and Managing Director of Radikon Studios in an information dispatch. "We want to bring Filipino artists a couple of steps closer to the global marketplace because we believe in their potential. It just needs to be focused like right now."

The production budget for Radikon's initial venture, which is set to be released locally in June or July this year, is reportedly less than $5 million.

"This is only the first of many films we [plan] to produce under the Radikon group," said Gaddini. "We also own Glow Animation, which is currently preparing for our other animated feature for world-wide release in 2008."

The offices of Radikon Studios is located at the Strathmore Business Building, Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City.

Grammy winners on Fliptunes

THE FOLLOWing songs and albums of winning artists in the 50th Grammy Awards are now available at the online music store Fliptunes Plus.

Song of the Year and Record of the Year "Rehab" by Amy Winehouse, from the album "Back to Black"; Best Rap Song "Good Life" by Kanye West, from "Graduation" which also won as Best Rap Album; "Where The Just Letter" by Herbie Hancock, which won Album of the Year; "Makes Me Wonder" by Maroon 5, Best Pop Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocals; "Because of You" by Kelly Clarkson, Best Contemporary R&B Album; and "Long Road Out of Eden" by The Eagles, Best Country Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocals roughly. Log on to the website www.Fliptunes.Plus.net.

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Jordin Sparks' first

"American Idol" winner Jordin Sparks' self-titled debut album (Sony BMG) comes after she joined the Idol Top Ten's American Idol Live tour. The album's lead single, "Tattoo," was written by Amanda Ghost (who composed James Blunt's "You're Beautiful"); another track, "Battlefield," is co-written by Chris Brown; there's also a bonus track, Jordin's Idol-winning song, "This Is My Time."

Mega's all-time favorites

Shereen Cuneta's multi-platinum, all-time selling album "She's So Romantic" (Sony BMG) has a Volume 2. Tracks include "I Wish That I Was Making Love To You," "Getting To Know Each Other," "Caught Up in the Rapture," "Miles Away," "Lead Me On," "Have Do You Keep the Music Playing," "Do You Wanna Dance," "Rolling," among others. These songs, said to be the artist's all-time favorites, are all done in acoustic.

Wyclef Jean returns

Fugees brother Wyclef Jean returns with a new solo album, "The Carnival II: Memoirs of an Immigrant" (EMC). It has collaborations with Paul Simon, Mary J. Blige, Haruki Jones, Akon, Eve, Sean of Stone's Jerry Tarkian, Lil' Wayne, Maddox, among others.

Rare performance

"The Everly Brothers Live!" (Alpha Music) captures the popular and influential folk-rock Don and Phil Everly in a rare performance in London's Albert Hall. It features 20 tracks of covers and originals including "Crying in the Rain," "Bye Bye Love," "All I Have To Do Is Dream," "Wake Up Little Susie," "So Sad (To Watch Good Love Go Bad)," "Bird Dog," "Problems," "Cathy's Clown," "Devoted To You," and a star-studded version of "Let It Be Me," among others.

Sponge Cola's 'Transit De Luxe'

Sponge Cola's album "Transit" (Universal Records), which went platinum recently, is now available in a new expanded format. The CD "Transit De Luxe" comes with six bonus tracks and seven music videos.

'Latin Chill'

New Filipina recording artist Julie Bonacci's debut album "The Love Lounge" (Sony BMG) is described as Latin Chill—a combination of soul, jazz, quiet storm, easy listening and bossa nova. It has 13 tracks—1 original and 12 covers of songs by Barbra Streisand, Dorothy Fields, Everything But The Girl, Bryan Lubin, Christopher Cross, Anita Baker, among others.

Manibela's debut

New Pinoy band Manibela's independently produced debut album, "Happy Insanity" (Soapstar Music), consists of the track "Guitar Adik." The band's members are Mickey Bustamante (vocals/guitars), JR Lucila (guitars), Glue de Leon (bass) and Bally Sinobayle (drums). The album is distributed by Alpha Music. Log on to its phonemusic ph.

Now, his dream show

From page G4

ness." Can you be more specific?

If I were cast as visible on TV as I am, I'd probably have more fun inside the cinema [laughs]. He debuted on this. The production team wanted to see "inside Gianna" para doon mas sensitive ang dating. I told her, I want the title to be more humorous [laughs].

You mentioned that this is similar to Lipton's show. But how is it different in terms of script and production?

Jennelly Que, writer: Of course the subjects are local. The actors are very appreciative because they are given a venue to talk about their lives. As they said, it's a work in progress. We're still looking for our niche. Basically, the script structure is disorganized. But we do not limit our guests. It's a free-wheeling, yet very insightful conversation.

Chito Rivarez, executive producer: I guess the difference lies mainly in the set design. The set of "Inside the Actor's Studio" is very simple. We try to make our set as lively and busy as possible.

We are assuming that you will be interviewing mostly the veterans.

We don't have a strict requirements, but yes. We want to feature actors who have been in the business for 20 years or more. I would love to do the likes of Caridad Sanchez, Anita Linda, and directors, writers, production designers. If I interviewed Chanda 15 or 20 years ago, it wouldn't have been this inspiring.

What was the first movie that you saw?

I don't remember the title but I'm sure it was Jaime Bores and Dolphy's. I watched it in the only theater in our hometown in Samar.

How did it affect you?

Mesipot. Hirang ang gusto ng mainis nila. Tawanan ako nang tawanan. Ang pagsinda ng kanin nila at ang pagsol ng sigar pan.

(Email: rmeran@inquirer.com.ph)

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TV or not TV

TV GMA's Jo Clauren Pilipino actress who plays Prudence in Julie Taymor's "across the Universe," proves sing the Beatles classic "I Wanna Hold Your Hand" in the soundtrack. One down to trailblazer in her version, period—to YouTube. Is it because she plays a gay Swedenader in the musical? Or Clauren Yatwood lives in New York, where she has also acted in Broadway plays, like "Rent."

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REVIEW

CHRISTIAN Bale in "3:10 to Yuma"

By Oliver H. Palumbarit
Contributor

IT'S SLUGGISH, BUT THE WESTern remake "3:10 to Yuma" is made enjoyable by precise and substantial performances by its main actors.

Russell Crowe and Christian Bale play mixed opposites—the outlaw and the law-abiding citizen, respectively—and that's reason enough to see it (anything with these two commercial acting powerhouses is worth checking out). But while this remake of the 1957 film of the same title utilizes the actors well, the watching itself requires patience.

Theoretically, "Yuma" should be rife with potential, being chockfull of the old movie conflicts: in a time when law and order are still largely undefined. The story succeeds in departing that, but the long, arduous tasks experienced by the characters seem to go nowhere at times. A fateful journey isn't without perils, that's true. But there's too much time between important anticipated events.

Enmity

Mainly, the story is about the evolving enmity between the cash-strapped rancher Dan Evans (Bale) and the loner James-style bandit Ben Wade (Crowe). Ben is apprehended shortly after committing some serious crimes. Dan, who volunteered Ben's lawlessness. By refusal, volunteers to escort him to a train bound for Yuma Prison. For a fee.

In truth, the two men's characters are sharply defined and established. Ben straight proves he's within in the cuts, while Dan as depicted as a no-nonsense ex-soldier with self-esteem issues. A few nasty slung to deliver the captured outlaw, but these token characters soon fade into the background.

The exception to that is William Evans Limmer), Dan's town son, who recently lost faith in—in fact, joins the cowering gang Lane. The absurdly shaky teaches son bond, it turned, of course, while the obnoxious prisoner, out of sense to assist and boredom, psychoanalyzes his newfound captives. Ben is confident that his loyal gang, led by the soulless Charlie Prince (a by and scene-stealing Ben Foster), is on their trail and will free him eventually.

Rewarding results

Director James Mangold doesn't seem to have a distinct visual storytelling style, but he's one of those filmmakers who does just fine without one. He's definitely versatile: his previous credits include "Identity" and "Walk the Line." Mangold has worked with reasonably gifted actors before, which has led to rewarding results. This time is no exception. Conflicted characters react and interact realistically and closely.

Bale and Crowe are convincing at their respective personas, not surprisingly. Still, both actors are especially edgy and intense

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Dan Burns (Steve Carell) is recently widowed but would like to get back into the dating game. Unfortunately, the first woman he falls for is his brother's girlfriend.

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All good seats for Maroon 5 gig sold out

By Pachabo Concepcion

AT PRESS TIME, ALL THE LOGE SEATS for the Monster 5 concert on Wednesday at the Araneta Coliseum have sold out—or at least are no longer available at Ticketnet. A call to the computerized ticketing network located at the Araneta Coliseum confirmed that only the following are available: VIP (P10,000); SRO (Upper Box A and B (P3,950 and P2,625); and General Admission (P1,575).

There's talk on the Net that tickets to the good seats—Patron, Lower Box—were "pulled out" of the outlets and bought in bulk by "a big client." Who is this "big client" and where are those tickets going?

What makes Maroon 5 a much sought-after act? "Songs About Jane," its debut album, contained material directly inspired by vocalist Adam Levine's stormy relationship with a girlfriend named Jane. The album subsequently spawned hits, notably "This Love" and "She Will Be Loved."

Released in 2002, the album enjoyed prolonged attention due to the band's constant touring—in some instances, as front act for the Rolling Stones.

Songs performed while on tour were scrambled and released as "Live—Friday the 13th," which became the basis for the band's Grammy for Best New Artist in 2005.

A new album, "It Won't Be Soon Before Long," was released last year and reportedly took much of its dance grooves from Prince. Method for doing so: "talking to friends. Just the square, frank rhythms heard on several tracks like "If I Never See You Face Again," "Makes Me Wonder," among others, remind us more of the Pete Yorn-Scarlett Johansson collaborations such as "I Pour On Rose [illegible]."

The recording reads like its predecessor, has been described as a "break-up album," or mostly about unsuccessful love affairs, but it's something that doesn't make you feel sad—since the music has a very uplifting quality.

On concert night, Levine's charismatic presence is bound to be the focus of the women in the audience.

When the west . . .

From page B1

here, even when there really isn't much to explore other than retail rides/ promenades reveal themselves. The superlative illusion brain of Bert and Wanda's behaviors are helpful, but not wholly unexpected when seen knows on "suddenly" mode known.

Overall, while it seems to take forever to reach its warm, subtle, ballet ridden climax, "I Am Love" is still worth it. Its powerful portrayals provide vivid contrasts, but relieve those established motions on models get meddled up, things barely get really exciting. Belatedly

SHOW TIME

OPENS MARCH 5

WHEN LEGEND RISES

GENERAL AUDIENCE — All Ages Admitted

10,000 B.C.

Summer CINEMA 10

EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE

THE FLOCK | JUMPER | 10,000 B.C. | VANTAGE POINT | MY BIG LOVE | DAN IN REAL LIFE | THE WATER HORSE

BIG SHOWS AT THE BIG DOME

MAROON 5 | EARTH, WIND & FIRE FEAT. AL MCKAY

TOTO | SWING OUT SISTER

SHOP & DINE AT ARANETA CENTER FOR A CHANCE TO WIN TICKETS | FOR 10 TO APRIL 5

ARANETA CENTER EVENTS

100% summer

100 VACATION PACKAGES FOR 4 AT STAKE!

SHOP, DINE & DRINK (ONE) ZERO FOR A CHANCE TO WIN 100 TRIPS FOR 4

FEB 18 - APR 20, 2008

AT THE CINEMAS

GLORIETTA 1

1 MY BIG LOVE | 2 THE FLOCK | 3 MY BIG LOVE | 4 MY BIG LOVE

GLORIETTA 4

1 THE WATER HORSE | 2 DAN IN REAL LIFE | 3 VANTAGE POINT

4 THE KITE RUNNER | 5 10,000 B.C. | 6 MY BIG LOVE | 7 THE FLOCK

GREENBELT 1

1 | 2

GREENBELT 3

1 JUMPER | 2 VANTAGE POINT

3 JUMPER | 4 THE WATER HORSE | 5 DAN IN REAL LIFE

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

1 MY BIG LOVE | 2 DAN IN REAL LIFE

3 THE WATER HORSE | 4 THE KITE RUNNER | 5 VANTAGE POINT

AYALA CENTER CEBU

1 MY BIG LOVE | 2 THE WATER HORSE | 3 ONE MISSED CALL | 4 JUMPER

MARKET! MARKET!

1 MY BIG LOVE | 2 THE FLOCK

3 JUMPER | 4 THE WATER HORSE | 5 MY BIG LOVE

TRINOMA

1 MY BIG LOVE | 2 VANTAGE POINT | 3 MY BIG LOVE | 4 THE KITE RUNNER

5 THE FLOCK | 6 DAN IN REAL LIFE | 7 THE WATER HORSE

AT THE MALLS

Ayala Malls

Glorietta — OPEN Installment Machines

Greenbelt — Greenbelt 3 Director Theatre Presents: BRANDSTAND SHOPPING SPREE

Alabang Town Center — Trinity Space live at Alabang Town Center

Ayala Center Cebu — HBO & HERO PROMO

Market! Market! — Trinity Space live at Market! Market!

Cristafel — Repertory Philippines presents ROMANCE IN 3

Ayala Museum — Third International Art Exhibition

Tri Nomma — Ambient Sounds at the Third

ACROSS THE UNIVERSE

OPENS MARCH 5 AT GLORIETTA 4 & GREENBELT 3 CINEMAS

ACROSS THE UNIVERSE

Golden Globe – Best Picture/Comedy or Musical, Nominee

Oscar – Best Costume Design, Nominee

"I fell in love with this movie."

"A lyrical, beautiful, visually enchanting musical."

"Across The Universe sweeps you up on a wave of terrific Beatles songs."

The GOLD & PLATINUM advantage

Present your Gold or Platinum card to our partner establishments for 2008 to avail of special discounts and freebies.

TIMEZONE

www.timezone.com.ph

Glorietta | Greenbelt | Alabang Town Center | Ayala Center Cebu | Tri Nomma

Just ₱25 for a chance to win an iPod!

PROMO MECHANICS

1. Every purchase of a McDonald's Float (COKE, Green Apple Sprite, and Pineapple Sprite) at any McDonald's outlet nationwide from March 2 to April 30, 2008 entitles you to a peel-apart card.

2. The peel-apart card gives you a chance to win 1 of 480 iPod:
   i. iPod Shuffle 1GB
   ii. iPod Nano 2GB
   iii. iPod Nano 4GB
   iv. iPod Nano Video 4GB
   v. iPod Touch 8GB

3. If you're the lucky winner of an iPod, there are two ways to claim your prize:
   a. If you're a resident of Metro Manila or nearby provinces (Batangas, Cavite, Laguna, Pampanga, Rizal), you must claim your iPod at the McDonald's Head Office at 17/F Citibank Center, Paseo De Roxas, Makati City, from Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm.
   b. If you're a provincial winner, you can claim your prize by showing the Restaurant Manager your winning card.

The iPod will be available at the McDonald's outlet where you got the peel-apart card two weeks after you notify the manager.

c. Actual prize may differ from what is seen in promotional merchandising.

4. Winners of the iPod must present the winning peel-apart card, proof of purchase, valid identification with photo (i.e. driver's license, passport, NBI clearance, SSS, TIN, voter's ID, etc.) in claiming the prize at the McDonald's Head Office or at the McDonald's outlet where he/she won the prize.

5. Redemption period is until 60 days from end of promo period. All unclaimed prizes after the 60-day period will be forfeited in favor of Golden Arches Development Corporation with prior approval of DTI.

6. Employees of Sponsors and Advertising Agency for this promo (Golden Arches Development Corporation, COBPI, TOCOEL StarCom, DDB Philippines, Dreyers & Bers Marketing and Communications Company) including their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity are not qualified to join the contest.

Download the latest McDonald's Float ringtone "Float Away" sung by Up Dharma Down.

Subscribers can download the ringtone by texting the keyword and desired ringtone type to 3348 for Globe, Sun, and Smart.

- Monophonic (for non-MMS phones)
  Text **MCDOTONE**
- Polyfonic (for MMS phones)
  Text **MCDOPOLY**
- MP3 tone (for MP3-capable phones)
  Text **MCDOMP3**

Ex. **MCDOPOLY** (send to 3348)

Download cost will depend on the ringtone type and carrier.

Ringtone Type	Globe	Smart	Sun
Monotone	P15	P15	P20
Polyfonic	P20	P15	P20
MP3 Tone	P30	P50	P50

Subscribers can also get information on the ringtone download process by texting MCDO to 3348 at P2.50/text for Globe and Smart and P2.00/text for Sun.

Promo runs from March 2 to April 30, 2008.